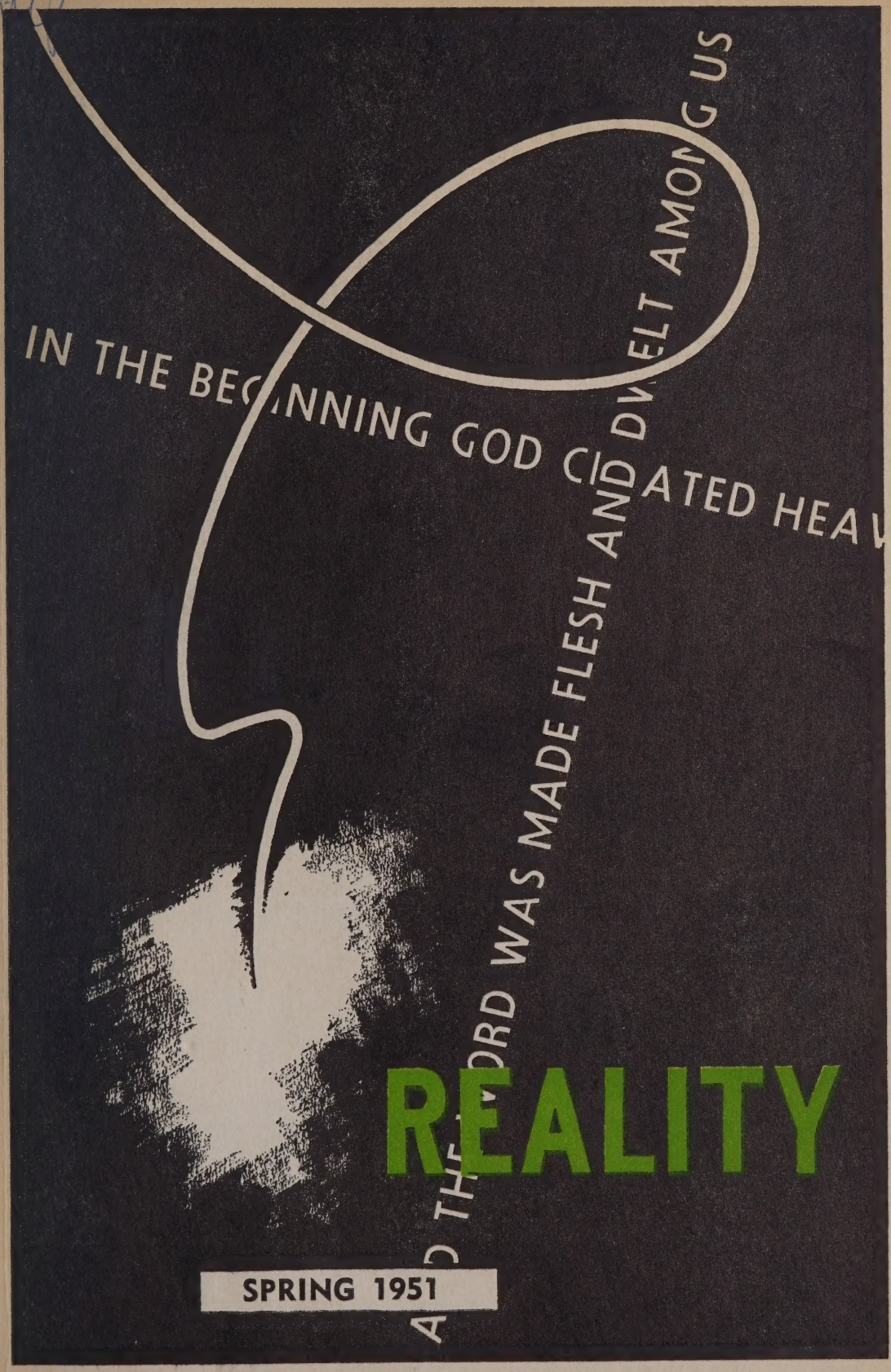
IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED HEAV
AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US
REALITY
SPRING 1951

REALITY

VOL. I SPRING, 1951 NO. 2

ST. THOMAS ON THE ASSUMPTION 73
Paul Mahoney, O.P.

ABSTRACTION 80
Christopher Kiesling, O.P.

BASIL, BISHOP-MONK 96
Mark Sullivan, O.P.

PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE 105
Leonard Wakefield, O.P.

CHRIST THE KING 114
Joachim Pender, O.P.

FIRST PRINCIPLES 119
Benedict Endres, O.P.

ANOMALOUS ANALOGY 130
Damian Fandal, O.P.

OUR COVER 136

REALITY is a publication of Thomistic studies by the Student Brothers of the Dominican Province of St. Albert the Great, Dominican House of Studies, River Forest, Illinois.

cum permissu superiorum

God, the Highest Truth, has created and guides human intellect, not that it may daily oppose new truths to rightly established ones but rather that having eliminated errors which may have crept in, it may build truth upon truth in the same order and structure that exist in reality, the source of truth.

Pius XII

Encyclical Humani Generis

ST. THOMAS ON THE ASSUMPTION

THROUGHOUT the history of the Church the Supreme Pontiffs have seldom exercised their extraordinary teaching power, and then only when the gravest of reasons prompted them to do so. During periods of doctrinal strife the exercise of this power proved an effective weapon against heresy. It was not dissension, however, which provoked two solemn papal definitions within the past century. On the contrary these definitions are primarily due to the almost unanimous accord of both clergy and laity in regard to matters of faith. A great part of the Catholic world called upon Pius IX to speak *ex cathedra* concerning Mary's Immaculate Conception; in an even more remarkable display of unanimity the faithful, led by their bishops, urged Pius XII to define the doctrine of Mary's Assumption. In the apostolic constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus,* Pope Pius XII refers to this universal agreement of the believing Church and declares that from it ". . . we have a certain and firm proof, demonstrating that the Blessed Virgin Mary's bodily Assumption into heaven . . . is a truth that has been revealed by God . . ." Besides this proof, we now have the infallible authority of the Vicar of Christ assuring us that Mary's Assumption is part of the deposit of faith which God revealed at the time of Christ and the Apostles. Pius XII has traced this traditional doctrine from the earliest ages of the Church until the present day, recounting the numerous Fathers and Doctors who have taught it.

After speaking of Saint Albert's teaching on the Assumption, the Holy Father continues, "Following the footsteps of his distinguished teacher, Saint Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor, despite the fact that he never dealt directly with this question, nevertheless, whenever he touched upon it, always held, together with the Catholic Church, that Mary's body had been assumed into heaven along with her soul."

In this article we propose to investigate Saint Thomas' views on the Assumption and to compare them with the defined dogma of the Church. Therefore we will first analyze the defined dogma, then the teaching of Saint Thomas, and finally we will compare both.

"We pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory." These are the words employed by Pius XII in defining the dogma. Before attempting an analysis, it would be well to mention a distinction, which Father Merkelbach in his *Mariologia* places at the beginning of the tract on the Assumption.[1] The term

[1]Merkelbach, O. P., *Mariologia* (Paris: Desclée, 1939), p. 272.

"Assumption," taken strictly, abstracts from death and resurrection, and means nothing more than a translation into heavenly glory. However, in actual fact it implies death, the immunity of the body from corruption in the grave, and a resurrection taking place a short time after death. From the wording of the definition we conclude that only the Assumption of our Lady, in the strict sense, abstracting from the questions of death and resurrection, is defined. The words "when the course of her earthly life was finished" do not necessarily imply that Mary died. All that seems to be defined in the Apostolic Constitution is that Mary's body and soul were assumed into heaven. It would appear that the Holy Father did not wish to exercise his extraordinary teaching power in reference to the mode of this assumption or to the questions of her death and resurrection. However, he does indicate over and over again in the Constitution that it is the common doctrine of the Church that Mary died and rose.[2]

Now what is the teaching of Saint Thomas on the doctrine? As His Holiness points out, the Angelic Doctor did not treat the question directly; he only touched upon it. We can find only six places in his works where he incidentally mentions Mary's Assumption. Although this is not very much, we nevertheless can determine from these citations his mind in the matter. The references will be found in the *Summa Theologica,* the *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard,* the *Commentary on the Apostles' Creed,* and the *Commentary on the Ave Maria.* (The authenticity of these last two works is now established.)

In the *Commentary on the Ave Maria,* his doctrine of Mary's Assumption finds its most explicit expression. In speaking of Mary's purity Saint Thomas says that our Lady was most pure in regard to fault because she was free from both mortal and venial sin. She was most pure, too, in reference to the punishment due to fault, which is the threefold curse of original sin. What is of most interest to us is the third punishment: that all men must return to dust. "From this the Blessed Virgin was immune," Saint Thomas writes, "because she was assumed together with her body into heaven; for we believe that *after*

[2]To cite only one instance: "In the same way it was not difficult for them to affirm that the great Mother of God, *like her only begotten Son, had actually passed from this life.* But this in no way prevented them from believing and from professing openly that her sacred body had never been subject to the corruption of the tomb, and that the august tabernacle of the Divine Word had never been reduced to dust and ashes." ("Munificentissimus Deus," Rev. Joseph C. Fenton, S.T.D., translator, *The Thomist,* Vol. XIV 1951, 3-21.) All quotations from the apostolic constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus,* used in this article are taken from Father Fenton's translation.

[3]"Tertio excedit Angelos quantum ad puritatem: quia Beata Virgo non solum erat pura in se, sed etiam procuravit puritatem in aliis. Ipsa enim purissima fuit et quantum ad culpam, quia ipsa Virgo nec mortale, nec veniale peccatum incurrit. Item quantum ad poenam. Tres enim maledictiones datae sunt hominibus propter peccatum . . . Tertia fuit communis viris, et mulieribus, scilicet ut in pulverem reverterentur. Et ab hac immunis fuit Beata Virgo: *quia cum corpore assumpta est in coelum: Credimus enim quod post mortem resuscitata fuerit et portata in coelum." (Expositio in salutationem angelicam.)* Note: *All quotations from the Summa Theologica used in this article are taken from the Leonine edition; while those from any other work of Saint Thomas are taken from the Parma edition.*

death she was brought back to life and carried into heaven."[3] It is noteworthy that there are three steps involved in this statement of his belief in Mary's Assumption: 1) Mary's soul was separated from her body by death ("after death"); 2) the soul was reunited to her body by a glorious resurrection ("she was brought back to life"); 3) and thus glorified and united she was assumed into heaven ("and carried into heaven").

The first step is Mary's death. From the text it is obvious that Saint Thomas believed in the fact of her death. But we may ask: did he believe that she had to die? The answer is yes, for he explicitly says so in answering an objection in the article dealing with her freedom from the inclination to sin. The objection is: "It would seem that the Blessed Virgin was not cleansed from the infection of the *fomes.* For just as the *fomes,* consisting in the rebellion of the lower powers against reason, is a punishment of original sin, so also are death and the other corporeal penalties. But the Blessed Virgin was subject to these penalties, therefore the *fomes* were not entirely removed from her." In answer he says, "Death and suchlike penalties do not of themselves incline us to sin. Wherefore, though Christ assumed them, He did not assume the *fomes.* Consequently in order that the Blessed Virgin might be conformed to her Son, from whose fulness her grace was derived, the *fomes* was at first fettered and afterwards taken away; while *she was not free from death and other such penalties."*[4] When treating the effects of sin Saint Thomas shows that death flows from the very nature of the body inasmuch as it is composed of contrary elements.[5] In the state of original justice Adam and Eve were preserved from this by the special grace of immortality. Through their sin this grace was lost to the human race; thus original sin is the cause (*causa removens prohibens*) of death by removing the gift of immortality. If one of Adam's children is to be preserved from death, it would be necessary to have restored to that one the grace of immortality. But this would not be done save for a good reason. Apparently Saint Thomas saw no reason for such an exception in the case of our Lady; thus, he accepts her death as an historical fact.

"After death, she was brought back to life," he writes in the quotation cited above. That he means a glorious resurrection, and not just a return to life as in the case of Lazarus, is evident from several other texts. When treating of the ceremonies of the Eucharist Saint Thomas

[4]"Ad tertium sic proceditur. Videtur quod Beata Virgo non fuerit emundata ab infectione fomitis. Sicut enim poena originalis peccati est fomes, qui consistit in inferiorum virium rebellione ad rationem, ita etiam poena originalis peccati est mors et ceterae poenalitates corporales. Sed Beata Virgo fuit subjecta hujusmodi poenalitatibus. Ergo etiam fomes ab ea totaliter remotus non fuit . . . Ad primum ergo dicendum quod mors et hujusmodi poenalitates de se non inclinant ad peccatum. Unde etiam Christus, licet assumpserit hujusmodi poenalitates, fomitem tamen non assumpserit. Unde etiam in Beata Virgine, ut Filio conformaretur, de cujus plenitudine gratiam accipiebat, primo quidem fuit ligatus fomes, et postea sublatus: *non autem fut liberata a morte et aliis hujusmodi poenalitatibus." (Summa Theologica* III, q. 27, a. 3.)

[5]*Ibid.,* II-II, q. 85, aa. 5 & 6.

wrote: "As Pope Sergius says . . . 'the Lord's body is threefold: the part offered and put into the chalice signifies Christ's risen body;' " then in his own words the Doctor of the Schools adds: "namely Christ and the Blessed Virgin, and the other saints, if there be any, who are already in glory with their bodies."[6] The words "if there be any" indicate the possibility of other saints being risen and assumed. Saint John the Evangelist is one mentioned by Saint Thomas. These words also show clearly that in Saint Thomas' mind there was no doubt of Mary's resurrection and assumption. In the *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* we find this statement: "The resurrection of certain members (of the mystical body) was not delayed till the end of the world, but followed immediately after the resurrection of Christ, as is piously believed concerning the Blessed Virgin and John the Evangelist."[7] In the *Commentary on the Apostles' Creed* he lists four differences between Christ's resurrection and that of others. The fourth difference, which is of interest to us, reads: "Christ's resurrection differs from that of others with regard to time: because the resurrection of others is deferred until the end of the world, save to those to whom by a special privilege it is granted earlier, as *to the Blessed Virgin* and, as is piously believed, to John the Evangelist."[8] These texts indicate that, in the mind of Saint Thomas, Mary's resurrection was glorious, was in anticipation of the general resurrection, and was due to a special privilege of grace.

Since her resurrection differs from ours only in the matter of time, we can legitimately apply his doctrine on the general resurrection to the resurrection of Mary. Saint Thomas mentions three acts necessary for the resurrection of the body: first, the collection of the ashes; second, the reforming of the body; and third, the infusion of the soul into the reformed body.[9] The first two acts are preparations for the essential act, the infusion of the soul. They are done through the ministration of angels[10] and are not necessary when there is no corruption of the body as in the case of our Lady.[11] The essential act of Mary's resurrection was the infusion of her beatified soul into her incorrupt body, and the principal efficient cause of this act was the Creator of that soul. The resurrection of her Son was the exemplar whereby our Lady rose and His risen humanity was the instrumental

---

[6]"Sicut Sergius Papa dicit et habetur in *Decretis, de Conser.*, dist. II: 'Triforme est corpus Domini. Pars oblata in calicem missa corpus Christi quod jam resurrexit demonstrat' scilicet Christum et *Beatam Virginem, vel si qui alii sancti cum corporibus sunt in gloria . . .*" (*Ibid.*, III, q. 85, a. 5 ad 8.)

[7]"Resurrectio quorumdam membrorum nobilium . . . non est dilata usque ad finem mundi sed statim resurrectionem Christi secuta est, *sicut pie creditur de beata Virgine, et Joanne Evangelista.*" (*In lib. IV*, dist. 43, q. 1, a. 3.)

[8]"Quarto differt quantum ad tempus: quia resurrectio aliorum differtur usque ad finem mundi, nisi aliquibus ex privilegio ante concedatur, *ut Beatae Virgini, et ut pie* creditur beatae Joanni Evangelistae . . ." (*Expositio in Symbolum Apostolorum, a.* 5.)

[9]*Summa Theol.*, Supp., q. 77, a 4.

[10]*Ibid.*, Supp., q. 76, a. 3.

[11]"Omnes resurgent a cineribus, in communi resurrectione: *nisi aliquibus ex speciali privilegio gratiae sit indultum contrarium, sicut et resurrectionis acceleratio.*" (*Ibid.*, Supp., q. 78, a. 2.)

efficient cause of her resurrection.[12] As Mary's soul was glorious from the beatific vision so her body became glorified after the union. Thus she enjoys all the qualities of a glorified body: impassibility, subtlety, agility, and clarity.

The final step in his doctrine is Mary's actual assumption. "She was carried into heaven," he writes in the *Commentary on the Ave Maria.* In question 83 of the third part of *Summa* he speaks of Mary's body being already in glory.[13] In the *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* he indicates that Christ and Mary enjoy the full participation of beatitude (i.e. being glorified both in body and spirit), while the other blessed are only in expectation of full beatitude.[14] In the tract on the ascension of Christ, Saint Thomas enunciates this principle: "Our dwelling place is one of generation and corruption, while the heavenly place is one of incorruption."[15] From this he concludes to the fittingness of Christ's ascension, since the Savior through His resurrection entered the incorruptible life. Now since, according to the Angelic Doctor, Mary too entered the life of glory by her resurrection, so would he see the fittingness of her transition to heaven.

Did Mary ascend by her own power? Saint Thomas asks this same question with reference to the ascension of Christ.[16] The power to ascend, he says, has a primary and secondary source. The divine nature is the primary source; while the power infused into the souls of the blessed, that is the power of glory, through which the resurrected bodies of the blessed will be glorified, is the secondary and proximate source of the ascending power. This power is nothing more than the quality of agility, by which the glorified body is moved to wherever the glorified soul wills. Christ ascended then first of all by reason of his divine nature; but secondarily and proximately by reason of the quality of agility, which is proper to the power of glory infused into His soul. Thus according to the doctrine of Saint Thomas we can say that Mary ascended of her own power, inasmuch as she possessed at the time of her assumption the quality of agility, which is the secondary and proximate source of ascending. That Mary should have this power is in no way incompatible with the fact that the term "assumption" is a passive word, and that Saint Thomas says, "she was *carried* into heaven." He answers the apparent difficulty when treating of the agility of glorified bodies. [17] "Glorified bodies are said to be born to heaven by the

---

[12]*Ibid.*, III, q. 56, a. 1, ad 3; Supp. q. 76, a. 1.

[13]*Ibid.*, III, q. 83, a. 5, ad 8.

[14]"Quidem autem sunt mortui; et hi sunt in duplici statu. Quia quidam in plena participatione beatitudinis; et hos est corpus Christi quod jam surrexit, sicut ipse Christius et *beata Virgine* . . . quidam autem sunt in expectatione plenae beatitudinis, qui vel stolam animae tantum, habent, vel neutram, ut his qui sunt in purgatorio . . ." (*In IV lib.*, dist. 12, q. 1, a. 3.)

[15]*Summa Theol.* III, q. 57, a. 1.

[16]*Ibid.*, III, q. 57, a. 3.

[17]"Dicendum quod corpora gloriosa dicuntur ferri ab angelis, et etiam in nubibus, non quasi eis indigeant, sed ad reverentiam designandum, quae corporibus gloriosis et ab angelis, et ab omnibus creaturis defertur." (*Ibid.*, Supp., q. 84, a. 1 ad 1.)

angels . . . not as though they needed them, but in order to signify the reverence which both angels and all creatures will show them."

The question now arises: with what certitude did Saint Thomas assent to the doctrine of Mary's resurrection and assumption? In the quotation from the *Commentary on the Sentences,* which is found above, he uses the words "as is piously believed" in reference to the anticipated resurrection of Mary and John the Evangelist. It is striking that Saint Thomas uses these words, for they are the same employed by Saint Albert when speaking of the type of assent that should be given to this doctrine. Saint Albert lists four types of doctrines in his treatment of the assumption of Mary, found in his *Mariale.*[18] First there are the truths clearly expressed in Sacred Scripture and against which no objection or doubt can be raised. They impose themselves upon our faith. Directly opposed to these he places apocryphal doctrines, which are entirely uncertain or at least doubtful. Then he says there are two types between the extremes. First he mentions the probable doctrines which are in the domain of opinion. Secondly, he lists those truths which are neither clearly written in Sacred Sripture nor evident of themselves, but which seem to flow from Sacred Scripture and impose themselves upon reason to such an extent that we can oppose to them no scriptural testimony and no serious reason. He concludes, "these truths are to be *piously believed.*" After defining these types of doctrines; he places them in the order of their perfection: 1) Truths of faith; 2) Truths to be piously believed; 3) Probable truths; and 4) Aprocryphal doctrines.

So it seems that Saint Thomas places the assumption of our Lady among the truths worthy of pious credence. However, if we read his reference to Mary's assumption in the *Commentary on the Apostles' Creed* closely and compare it with the quotation cited above from the *Commentary on the Sentences,* we see a difference concerning the type of assent to be given to this doctrine.[19] In the *Commentary on the Sentences* he says, "as is piously believed of the Blessed Virgin and John the Evangelist," while in the *Commentary on the Apostles' Creed* we read, "which was granted to the Blessed Virgin and, as is piously believed, to John the Evangelist." The *Commentary on the Sentences* was written between 1254 and 1256. Thus Saint Thomas was about 31 years old when he finished this work, and probably very much under the influence of Saint Albert. So in this work, like Saint Albert, he held that the Assumption was only a pious belief. However seventeen years later, in the *Commentary on the Apostles' Creed,* he deliberately avoided the use of the term "piously believed" with regard to Mary and applies

---

[18]Q. 132, *Opera Omnia,* XXXVII, p. 187, (Ed. Vives: Paris, 1890-1893).

[19]These two quotations will be found in footnotes 7 & 8. Note the difference: ". . . non dilata usque ad finem mundi, sed statim resurrectionem Christi secuta est, *sicut pie creditur de beata Virgine, et Joanne Evangelista." (Comm. supra Sententias Petri Lombardi.)* "Resurrectio aliorum differtur usque ad finem mundi, nisi aliquibus ex privilegio ante concedatur, *ut beatae Virgini, et ut pie creditur beatae Joanni Evangelistae . . ." (Expositio in Symbolum Apostolorum.)*

it only to the Beloved Apostle. So we can conclude that later in life Saint Thomas thought our Lady's assumption worthy of more than pious credence in the sense defined by Albert the Great.

Now that we have seen the doctrine of Saint Thomas, let us compare briefly his doctrine with the defined dogma. The dogma is to be taken in a very strict sense, meaning only Mary's bodily transition into heavenly glory, as we have seen above. As we have seen too, Saint Thomas firmly believed that our Lady was assumed both body and soul to heaven. Over and above this he held that she died and rose gloriously and thus, with her body and soul united, she was taken up into the place of the blessed.

Among the prayers attributed to the Angelic Doctor there is one addressed to our Lady. Part of it reads: "I pray also my only Mother, gate of heaven, and gracious advocate of sinners, let me not deviate from the holy Catholic Faith . . ." Our Lady granted Thomas what he petitioned; through her intercession he became the Prince of Theologians. He held firm to the traditional Catholic Faith and by reason of the Catholic Faith he believed in the corporeal assumption of his Lady and his Queen.

Paul Mahoney, O.P.

ABSTRACTION

AS PERENNIAL as the problem of the one and the many is the problem of the division of the sciences. Though differing, perhaps, in the direction of their approach, in their terminology, in their ultimate resolutions of detailed difficulties, modern Thomists commonly construct their solutions to this perpetual puzzle of the division of the sciences on the fundamental doctrine of "the three degrees of abstraction."

Our purpose here is to study abstraction with a view to understanding better its role in distinguishing the sciences. This essay will, we hope, begin, but only begin, to clarify our comprehension of what we mean by "the three degrees of abstraction" by fixing the meanings of terms, by indicating the various kinds of abstraction, by observing the analogous transfer of words. In our philosophical courses and in our reading we constantly meet the word "abstraction" used with various meanings and in widely diverse contexts. But more often than not the printed or spoken word "abstraction" evokes in the reader's or listener's mind only a rather vague, confused notion. We hope this paper will give the reader a more precise and ordered conception of abstraction that he may better understand the many doctrines into whose context it is intimately woven.

We have approached this task of clarification in the following manner. Putting aside, first of all, our current, vague notions of what abstraction is, what the various kinds of abstraction are, and, consequently, what the phrase "three degrees of abstraction" means, we have tried to see what exists ontologically and what happens psychologically in reality. The chief source and guide in this investigation is St. Thomas in his most extensive treatment of abstraction found in his commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate.* This commentary serves as the key to other of St. Thomas' discussions of abstraction and fixes for us the basic signification of terms.[1] We can then watch the analogous transfer of words. The next step is to study the terminology of St. Thomas' commentators, early and contemporary, to see exactly what in reality they wish to signify. With this method we could obtain for ourselves a concept of what is and could see the real unity of the frequent seemingly-contradictory statements of St. Thomas and his commentators.

The human mind is limited and can see only bits of one reality at any one time. St. Thomas, Cajetan, John of St. Thomas and the other

[1]We employ numerous footnotes in this article. The text itself concisely presents the substance of the doctrine. The footnotes, chiefly quotations from St. Thomas, are intended mainly to manifest the Doctor's own terminology and doctrine, occasionally to throw light on the rather brief text.

commentators up to the present are all discussing the same reality. But often their points of view differ, and consequently the writings of the masters often seem in opposition. But once the reality and the particular points of view of the individual thinkers are understood, the contradictions vanish and the mind rejoices in the beautiful simplicity of creation and humbles itself before the Creator.

We can in this short paper only indicate the direction of this clarification process. As to the investigation of the various commentators' views and modern terminology we offer practically nothing. We cannot, moreover, resolve all the difficulties in the matter presented, not only because we must be brief, but also because we do not know the answers to many of those difficulties. But we feel confident that here the reader will find a start in the right direction and if he continues on this road he will reach the goal.

The Questions

Our intention in this paper is to answer three questions. The first question is this: what does the phrase "three degrees of abstraction" most properly signify? Does the phrase refer to three mental acts each casting aside more matter? Or does it refer to three realities conceived and thus immaterialized at diverse levels? Or does it refer to three objective foundations in things making possible their conceptualization at different levels of immateriality? In other words, is "abstraction" in the phrase under question to be understood formally, denominatively, or fundamentally?

These various understandings of "abstraction" must be clearly grasped. A parallel from the art of painting will help. An artist decides to paint, as many a modern artist has, a picture of boxes, bottles, papers, a clock, vase, guitar on a table. He finds a real table and covers it with real boxes, bottles, etc. He then proceeds to paint, but he does not put on his canvas every detail that he sees before his eyes. He leaves out of his painting many of the folds and creases of the table cloth, many of the shadows and colors reflected in the bottles, perhaps even parts of the objects themselves to effect better interior balance within the bounds of his two-dimensional canvas. He may even leave out of his painting the third dimension he sees in reality. But what he does put on his canvas is found in his exemplar. What he does paint is drawn out of and away from, is "abstracted" from the real table and the objects upon it.

The activity of the artist whereby he takes certain lines, colors, etc., out of his model and ignores others is the action of abstracting or "abstraction." This is to understand the word "abstraction" formally. The painting, finally hung in the museum, is catalogued an "abstraction." But the word so used does not signify the action of the artist, for that is not in the museum, but it does signify the resultant product of the act of abstracting. "Abstraction" is here used denominatively, for the product is denominated or called by the name of the action effecting it. The lines, shapes, colors, etc., which are found in the painting and which the artist drew from his model are really present in the exemplar. As they are

present in the model they are the foundations for the artist's activity of abstracting and for the resultant products. They can be called "abstractions" but are so fundamentally.

Our own question about abstraction in regard to intellectual knowledge is, then, this: is "abstraction" in the phrase "the three degrees of abstraction" to be understood formally, i.e., as an act of the mind casting aside matter, or denominatively, i.e., as the resultant product in the mind of that act, or fundamentally, i.e., as the objective reality making possible that activity.[2]

The second question is simply this: what are positive and negative abstraction? The third question is this: what do total and formal abstraction signify and in which degree of abstraction is each to be found?

Thought and Truth[3]

To untie the knot of these questions we must begin with a consideration of intellectual activity and its laws. The mind has a twofold operation.[4] The first act of the mind is to comprehend the whatness or essences of things contacted in daily experience. It seizes in men, trees, stones that reality which constitutes each of them in a definite place in the hierarchy of beings. This act of the mind is called simple apprehension. The second act of the mind is not a simple gaze at *what* men or trees are, but it considers *how* in the passing flux outside of the mind men or trees actually exist. The second act of the mind, judgment, is concerned with the existence of things.[5]

---

[2]A similar case is found in the use of the word "distinction." Distinction formally taken is the act of separating two realities. Distinction fundamentally considered is the objective foundation for that act, e.g., a virtual distinction. Distinction denominatively understood is the result of that act, e.g., a distinction of reason reasoned.

[3]St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Librum Boethii de Trinitate, Questiones Quinta et Sexta,* (nach dem Autograph Cod. Vat. Lat. 9850 mit Einleitung herausgegeben von Paul Wyser, O.P., Fribourg, 1948) q. 5, a. 3. This commentary is the root of the doctrine of this article. Cf. concerning the several redactions of this commentary, the excellent study of L. B. Geiger, O.P., "Abstraction et séparation d'après S. Thomas in De Trinitate, q. 5, a. 3," *Revue des Science Philosophique et Theologique,* XXXI (1947), 3-40. Cf. also J.-D. Robert, O.P., "La métaphysique, science distincte de toute autre discipline philosophique, selon saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Divus Thomas* (Piacenza), XXIV (1947), 206-222. Cf. concerning thought and truth St. Thomas, *In Aristotelis Librum de Anima Commentarium* (ed. Pirotta, Turin: Marietti, 1936), III, lect. 8, n. 717; *ibid.*, lect. 12, nn. 781-2.

[4]*In Libr. Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 3, resp.; *In de Anima,* III, lect. 11; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus* (ed. Reiser, 3 vols.; Turin: Marietti, 1930-37), Phil. Nat., IV, q. 11, a. 3 (III, 366 b 40-373 b 17).

[5]Note that Aristotle and St. Thomas speak of two acts of the mind: the simple grasp of natures and composition and division. But composition and division embrace the making of the enunciation, the judgment, and reasoning. "Nam per enuntiationis apprehenduntur extrema ut coniuncta inter se, et fit collatio seu comparatio unius extremi ad aliud; judicium autem facit comparationem et collationem illius propositionis compositae ad id, quod est in re vel ad principia a quibus dependet veritas rei." (John of St. Thomas, *op cit.*, 370 a 43-b 2.) "Et hoc ideo, quia in secunda operatione invenitur veritas vel falsitas, sed non innotescit statim ex simplici et nuda enuntiatione, quae est prima formatio secundae operationis et status eius imperfectus. Ad manifestandum autem veritatem, quae ibi nondum potest innotescere, ordinatur inquisitio et discursus . . . qua probatione facta formatur consummata comparatio et collatio secundae operationis, que est judicium." (*ibid.*, 371 b 35-49.)

A healthy mind, one conformed to reality, is bound by the laws of truth. The first act of the mind, since its aim is to understand the whatness of things, must grasp that whatness in so far as it is understandable or knowable. But things are knowable in so far as they are actual, determined. Thus the first act of the mind truly comprehends the essences of things by contacting that which is actual or determined in regard to them.

Sometimes the whatness to be grasped is itself nothing but determination, as when it is an independent determining principle, such as "chairness." Sometimes the whatness is composed of a determining principle and a determinable principle, form and matter, such as the whatness of chicken, a composite of a specific vital principle and a body of definite dispositions. Were it not for that specific vital principle, the determining element, there would be no chicken of which we could know the essence. Sometimes the whatness is little more than its order to some determined reality. We understand what a vacuum is only in relation to air or gas.

The understandableness of the real whatness in all these cases depends on that actuality or determination which the whatness is in itself, or which is part of it, or to which it necessarily has an order; and only in view of that determination can we understand what each of these things is. The first operation of the mind is true in its apprehension of an essence only when it embraces all the determined elements which constitute that essence's intelligibility, whether these elements be intrinsic or extrinsic to the essence.[6]

The second operation of the mind, judgment, since its aim is to comprehend things as they stand in their complex existential relations to each other, must conform itself to those actual conditions in which things exist. If two realities do in fact exist together, truth demands that the mind so judge. If two realities do not in fact exist together, the mind

---

[6]"Cum enim unaquaeque res sit intelligibilis secundum quod est in actu . . . opportet quod ipsa natura sive quidditas rei intelligatur vel secundum quod est actus quidem, sicut accidit de ispsis formis et substantiis simplicibus, vel secundum id quod est actus, sicut substantiae compositate per suas formas, vel secunum id quod est ei loco actus, sicut materia prima per habitudinem ad forman, et vacuum per privationem locati, et hoc est illud, ex quo unaquaquae natura suam rationem sortitur. Quando ergo hoc, per quod constituitur ratio naturae et per quod ipsa natura intelligitur . . . habet ordinem et dependentiam ad aliquid aliud, tunc constat quod natura illa sine illo alio intelligi non potest . . ." (*In Libr. Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 3, resp.)

St. Thomas defines *ratio:* "nihil aliud est quam id quod apprehendit intellectus de significatione alicujus nominis: et hoc in his quae habent definitionem, est ipsa rei definito . . . sed quaedam dicuntur habere rationem sic dictam, quae non definiuntur, sicut quantitas et qualitas, et hujusmodi, quae non definiuntur, quia sunt genera generalissima . . . Unde non refert, utrum illa quae dicuntur habere rationem, habeant vel non habeant definitionem." (*Scriptum Super Libros Sententiarum* [ed. Mandonnet and Moos, 4 vols., Paris: Lethielleux, 1929-47], I, dist. 2, q. 1, sol.)

must say so. After greeting a close friend with a warm hand-shake we judge falsely if we assert that a hand is not an integral part of man.[7]

Distinction: Abstraction, Separation

By either of these two activities of the mind we conceive of things as separate, removed, distinct from one another. The generic name for this operation is distinction. The specific type of distinction found in simple apprehension is abstraction; in judgment, separation.[8]

In its first operation the mind grasps what things are. The only demand imposed on the mind by truth is that it seize all that is necessary for the understanding of what any object is. If something is mingled with the object of the intellect but is not essential for an understanding of what that object is, the intellect may ignore it. We can, for example, comprehend what man is without including legs or toes in our idea, because legs or toes are not determined realities which wholly or in part make man what he is or to which man bespeaks an essential order. We can intellectually draw away or abstract from legs and toes the whatness of man, i.e., soul and properly disposed matter or body. This mental activity by which we consider one thing while simply not considering another thing which really exists with the former is most properly called abstraction.[9] Abstraction, in turn, formally taken, signifies this operation of distinction found in the first act of the mind.

Abstraction is of two kinds, that of a whole from its parts and that of form from matter.[10]

Legs, feet, fingers are called material parts of man. We can abstract from material parts, parts which are accidental to the whatness and which do not constitute the essence's understanableness. In a similar relationship to the whatness stand all those elements which are united to the essence in each individual, limiting the essence to that individual. Such elements are *this* quantity, *this* color, *this* place, etc., the totality of which makes Socrates Socrates and Plato Plato but does not make man man. We can abstract from these limiting elements and consider the nature common to many individuals. These individuals, as Socrates and Plato, are subjec-

---

[7]"Et quia veritas intellectus est ex hoc, quod conformatur (rei), patet quod secundum hanc secundam operationem intellectus non potest vere abstrahere, quod secundum rem coniunctum est . . . si abstraho hominem ab albedine dicendo 'homo non est albus,' significo esse separtionem in re. Unde si secundum rem homo et albedo non sint separata, erit intellectus falsus. Hac ergo operatione intellectus vere abstrahere non potest nisi ea quae sunt secundum rem separata, ut cum dictur 'homo non est asinus.' " (*In Libr. Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 3, resp.)

[8]"Sic ergo intellectus distinguit unum ab altero aliter et aliter secundum diveras operationes, quia secundum operationem, qua component et dividit, distinguit unum ab alio per hoc, quod intelligit unum alii non inesse. In operatione vero qua intelligit quid est unumquodque, distinguit unum ab alio, dum intelligit quid est hoc, nihil intelligendo de alio, neque quod sit cum eo, neque quod sit ab eo separatum. Unde ista distinctio non proprie habet nomen separationis, sed prima tantum. Haec autem distinctio recte dicitur abstractio . . ." (*loc. cit.*)

[9]"Haec autem distinctio recte dicitur abstractio, sed tunc tantum quando ea, quorum unum sine altero intelligitur, sunt simul secundum rem . . . cum abstractio non possit esse, proprie loquendo, nisi coniunctorum secundum rem . . ." (*loc. cit.*)

[10]". . . duplex est abstractio: una qua forma abstrahitur a materia, alia qua totum abstrahitur a partibus." (*loc. cit.*)

tive parts of the common nature which is a kind of whole. To grasp the common whatness without its accidents or without its limiting elements is to abstract a whole from its parts.[11]

The same relationships hold for generic realities with regard to specific. To consider animal without considering man and cow is to abstract a whole from its parts.

All accidents are related to their subjects as form to matter. The whatness of any accident is constituted by its order to substance, for by nature it is destined to inhere in and modify substance. Therefore a consideration of the essence of an accident involves a simultaneous understanding of some underlying subject.[12] But that consideration does not necessarily involve an understanding of this or that particular kind of subject. We cannot consider the whiteness which is in Socrates independently of any subject, but we can consider that whiteness in Socrates without considering Socrates himself.[13] To abstract form from matter is to consider, without at the same time understanding its particular subject, a form which actually exists in a particular subject, but whose whatness is not constituted by an order to that particular subject.

An abstraction of material or subjective parts from their whole, the opposite of the first type, is impossible. The whatness of a human foot or leg, of this or that man, is constituted by its order to or union with human nature.[14] In view of the rule of truth, a whatness radically de-

---

[11]"Sed digitus, pes et manus et aliae huiusmodi partes sunt praeter intellectum hominis, unde ex eis ratio essentialis hominis non dependet et homo sine his intelligi potest . . . Et hae partes dicuntur partes materiae, quae non ponuntur in definitione totius . . . et hoc modo se habent ad hominem omnes partes signatae, sicut haec anima et hoc corpus et hic unguis et hoc os et huiusmodi. Hae enim partes sunt quidem partes essentiae Socratis et Platonis, non autem hominis in quatum homo, et ideo potest homo abstrahi per intellectum ab istis partibus." (*loc. cit.*)

Individuals are subjective parts of the common nature, as species are of the genus, in so far as they are "put under" or subjected as inferiors to their superiors (the common nature or species and the genus) in the Porphyrian Tree and are subjects of their superiors in predication.

[12]"Forma autem illa potest a materia aliqua abstrahi, cuius ratio essentiae non dependet a tali materia. Ab illa autem materia non potest forma abstrahi per intellectum, a qua secundum suae essentiae rationem dependet. Unde cum omnia accidentia comparentur ad substantiam sicut forma ad materiam et cuiuslibet accidentis ratio dependeat a substantia, impossible est, aliquam talem formam a substantia separari." (*loc. cit.*) "Oportet autem quod proprium subjectum ponatur in definitione accidentis . . . Cuius quidem ratio est, quia cum esse accidentis dependeat a subjecto, oportet etiam quod definitio eius significans *esse* ipsius contineat in se subiectum." (St. Thomas, *Expositio in Aristotelis Libros Peri Hermeneias* [ed. Leonine, vol. 1, Rome, 1882] I, lect. 10, n. 4.)

[13]"Si vero unum ab altero non dependeat secundum id quod constituit rationem naturae, tunc unum potest ab altero abstrahi per intellectum ut sine eo intelligatur, non solum si sint separata secundum rem . . . sed etiam si secundum rem coniuncta sint, sive ea coniunctione qua pars et totum coniunguntur . . . sive etiam sint coniuncta per modum quo forma coniungitur materiae, et accidens subiecto, sicut albedo potest intelligi sine homine et e converso." (*In Libr. Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 3, resp.)

[14]". . . pes non potest intelligi sine intellectu animalis, quia id a quo pes habet rationem pedis, dependet ab eo a quo animal est animal . . ." (*loc. cit.*)

pendent on another is knowable only in view of that other. That other cannot be abstracted from, left out of consideration.

The nature which in daily experience we abstract from material or subjective parts, is a whole composed of "parts of the species" or "parts of the form." Human nature, abstracted from Socrates and Plato, is constituted of body and soul. Obviously the whole nature cannot be abstracted from either of these constituitive parts, for the nature is these two parts.[15]

An abstraction of matter from form, the opposite of the second type of abstraction, is possible in so far as the matter in question does not depend on the form in its whatness and consequent intelligibility. Thus we can consider Plato without considering the whiteness which actually exists in him.[16] Prime matter, however, cannot be conceived without substantial form, since its whatness is an essential order to substantial form.

Distinction in the second act of the mind is a negative judgment called separation. Since judgment is concerned with the existence of things, its distinguishing concerns those things which actually exist separately or can exist separately.[17] We distinguish man from horse by judging, "man is not a horse." Simply to consider man without considering horse would not be distinguishing at all, but would be merely apprehending man.[18]

A radical difference sets abstraction apart from separation. Abstraction is a consideration of one thing without a consideration of a second thing, both of which actually and necessarily exist as one, although the former does not depend on the second in its whatness and understandableness. Separation is a consideration of two things as separate realities, both of which can or do exist independently and do not depend in their whatness and intelligibility upon each other.

---

[15]"Totum etiam non a quibuslibet partibus abstrahi potest. Sunt enim quaedam partes, ex quibus ratio totius dependet, quando scilicet hoc est esse tali toti, quod ex talibus partibus componi, sicut se habet syllaba ad litteras et mixtum ad elementa; et tales partes dicuntur partes speciei et formae, sine quibus totum intelligi non potest, cum ponantur in eius definitione . . . Similiter etiam per se competit homini quod inveniatur in eo anima rationalis et corpus compositum ex quatuor elementis; unde sine his partibus homo intelligi non potest, sed haec oportet poni in definitione eius, unde sunt partes speciei et formae." (*loc. cit.*) "Form" in this context is not the form of physics (*forma partis*), the principle determining prime matter, but the entire essence, the form of the whole (*forma totius*), "quae est totum, scilicet formam complectens et materiam." (St. Thomas, *De Ente et Essentia* [ed. Boyer, Rome: Gregorian University, 1946], chap. 3, near the end.) ". . . non solum forma partis dicitur natura, sed species ipsa quae est forma totius." (St. Thomas, *In Metaphysicam Aristotelis Commentaria* [ed. Cathala, Turin: Marietti, 1935], V, lect. 5, n. 822.)

[16]Cf. note 13.

[17]"Hac ergo operatione intellectus vere abstrahere non potest nisi ea quae sunt secundum rem separata, ut cum dicitur 'homo non est asinus.'" (*In Libr. Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 3, resp.) ". . . pars . . . potest etiam sine toto esse, si sit de partibus speciei, sicut linea sine triangulo vel littera sine syllaba vel elementum sine mixto. In his autem quae secundum esse divisa, magis habet locum separatio quam abstractio." (*loc. cit.*)

[18]"Non enim dicitur animal a lapide abstrahi, si animal absque intellectu lapidis intelligatur. Unde cum abstractio non possit esse, proprie loquendo, nisi coniunctorum secundum rem, secundum duos modos coniunctionis praedictos, scilicet quo pars et totum uniuntur vel forma et materia, duplex est abstracio . . ." (*loc. cit.*)

The Structure of Reality

After considering what the mind can do and within what limits it acts, we must next consider what reality itself offers to the mind within those limits.

There are two kinds of being, material beings and immaterial beings.[19] The study of physics reveals to us the structure of material beings, the elements, plants, animals, men, the things we contact in daily experience. Physics leads us further to the existence of being which cause the changes we observe in nature but whose inner structure remains something of a mystery to us.

Material beings are basically composed of prime matter and substantial form. By means of its first accidental perfection, quantity, material substance acquires extension and substantial, integral parts. The quantified material substance then becomes host to various sensible qualities, color, hardness, heat. It becomes recipient of the operation of other bodies and changes from place to place or from one quality to another in time. And such beings are many and individual because many private chunks of extension house them.

A definite order is found in the perfections making up the complex beings of our material world. And the order is such that, while all these perfections exist together in any individual changeable being, their whatnesses are not in every case mutually dependent on one another. Quantity by its very nature is meant to give extension to the composite of matter and form. The whatness of quantity, therefore, necessarily bespeaks material substance. The sensible qualities, color, hardness, heat, and physical motion by their very nature are modifications of quantified substance. These sensible accidents, therefore, depend in their whatness upon quantified substance and are unintelligible save in view of quantified substance.

Quantity, though dependent on substance, does not depend on the sensible accidents in its essence (even though it is found existing with them in material beings), because it is prior in nature. The sensible accidents depend on quantity but quantity does not depend on them, as the bricks of a wall depend on the foundation but the foundation does not depend on them.[20] Finally, these material substances with their retinue of accidents

---

[19]"Dicendum quod substantiae immateriales creatae in genere quidem naturali non conveniunt cum substantiis materialibus, quia non est in eis eadem ratio potentiae et materiae; conveniunt tamen cum eis in genere logico, quia etiam substantiae immateriales sunt in praedicamento Substantiae, cum earum quidditas non sit earum esse. Sed Deus non convenit cum rebus materialibus neque secundum genus naturale, neque secundum genus logicum . . ." (St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica,* I, q. 88, a. 2, ad 4. Cf. St. Thomas, *In Meta.,* XII, lect. 2, nn. 2424-7; *ibid.,* IV, lect. 5, n. 593 quoted in note 27.)

[20]"Unde cum omnia accidentia comparentur ad substantiam sicus forma ad materiam et cuiuslibet accidentis ratio dependeat a substantia, impossible est, aliquam talem formam a substantia separari. Sed accidentia superveniunt substantiae quodam ordine; nam primo advent ei quantitas, deinde qualitas, deinde passiones et motus. Unde quantitas potest intelligi in . . . substantia, antequam intelligantur in ea qualitates sensibiles . . ." (*In Libr. Boeth. de Trin.,* q 5, a. 3, resp.)

are independent in themselves of the various individuals in which they are realized in the course of time. Humanity did not first come to be with the birth of Caesar, nor did it cease to be with his death.[21]

Because these perfections, the material nature itself and quantity, enjoy in their whatness independence from individuals or from sensible characteristics, they enjoy also independence from these in their understandableness. Therefore, although these things exist together with many other elements in any one object we see about us, when grasping what any object is, we can consider truthfully one of these perfections without considering the other elements of which it is independent.

We can consider the nature without considering the individuals in which it exists. We can abstract a whole from its subjective parts.[22] Since these parts are material, sensible, individual, this operation is to abstract a whole from individual sensible matter.[23] But it must be noted that the abstracted whole is a material nature constituted of matter and form, which form demands for its existence certain sensible characteristics. Human nature is constituted of a soul and of a body which must have a certain amount of heat, must undergo movements for respiration, etc. to support the soul in existence. While it is possible to abstract from this or that body with this or that bodily heat, it is not possible to abstract from these things in common and still know human nature. The nature abstracted from material individuals always includes common sensible matter.[24]

We can consider quantity without considering the sensible characteristics which depend upon it but upon which it does not itself depend. It is in virtue of those characteristics of color, hardness, heat, motion that matter is termed sensible. To consider, therefore, the form quantity with

---

[21]"Hoc autem contingit in omnibus habentibus formam in materia, quia in eis est aliquid praeter principia speciei. Nam natura speciei individuatur per materiam; unde principia individuantia et accidentia individui sunt praeter essentiam speciei." (*In de Anima,* III, lect. 8, n. 706; *ibid.,* lect. 12, n. 784.)

[22]"Abstrahit tamen circa naturalia intellectus . . . inquantum intelligit naturam speciei sine principiis individuantibus, quae non cadunt in definitione speciei." (*ibid.,* III, lect. 12, n. 784. Cf. note 11.)

[23]"Materia enim sensibilis dicitur materia corporalis secundum quod subiacet qualitatibus sensibilibus, scilicet calido et frigido, duro et moli, et huiusmodi. Materia vero intelligibilis dicitur substantia secundum quod subiacet quantitati." And ". . . materia est duplex, scilicet communis, et signata vel individualis; communis quidem, ut caro et os; individualis autem, ut hae carnes et haec ossa. Intellectus igitur abstrahit speciem rei naturalis a materia sensibili individuali, non autem a materia sensibili communi." (*Summa Theologica,* I, q. 85, a. 1, ad. 2. Cf. *In de Anima,* III, lect. 8, nn. 707-8.)

[24]"Quaedam ergo sunt formae quae materiam requirunt sub determinata dispositione sensibilium qualitatum; et hujusmodi sunt omnes formae naturales; et idcirco naturalia concernunt materiam sensibilem." (*In de Anima,* III, lect. 8, n. 708.)

"Unde oportet quod huiusmodi rationes, secundum quas de rebus mobilibus possunt esse scientiae, considerentur absque materia signata et absque omnibus his, quae consequuntur materiam signatam, non autem absque materia non signata, quia ex eius notione dependent notio formae, quae determinat sibi materiam. Et ideo ratio hominis quam significat definitio et secundum quam procedit scientia, consideratur sine his carnibus et sine his ossibus, non autem sine carnibus et ossibus absolute." (*In Libr. Boeth. de Trin.,* q. 5, a. 2, resp.)

an underlying substance which quantity as an accident demands, without considering those sensible characteristics, is to abstract a form from sensible matter, or more precisely, is to abstract a form from sensible matter, not only individual but even common sensible matter.[25]

The material substance necessarily underlying the quantity, now bereft of sensible characteristics, is intelligible matter. And although naturally the whatness of quantity as an accident ncessarily involves some material subject of inherence, its whatness does not demand that the subject be any particular kind of substance, as man or iron. Thus, when considering quantity apart from sensible characteristics, although what is abstracted does not include individual intelligible matter, it does include common intelligible matter, material substance in general.[26]

Two Degrees of Abstraction

We say that truth allowed the mind in its basic operation to make two sorts of abstraction, that of a whole from its parts and that of a form from matter. We have just seen that any individual object we see about us, by reason of its peculiar structure, offers to the mind two perfections which can be abstracted. Whole natures can be abstracted from the individuals after the manner of a whole from its parts. Quantity informing material substance can be abstracted from sensible matter, individual and common, after the manner of a form from matter.

Each of these things which can be abstracted, although always existing in individual sensible matter, enjoys in its whatness and intelligibility a certain independence from individual sensible matter. The whole nature involving common sensible matter is independent of individual sensible matter alone. Quantity with a substanial substratum is independent of all sensible matter. Thus the mind in each of its abstractions attains in concrete material objects perfections which are in themselves more or less independent of individual sensible matter, more or less immaterial,

---

[25]"Est enim duplex materia: scilicet sensibilis, a qua abstrahunt mathematica et concernunt eam naturalis, et intelligibilis, quam mathematica concernunt. Quod quidem sic intelligendum est. Manifestum est enim, quod quantitas immediate inhaeret substantiae: qualitates autem sensibiles in quantitate fundantur, ut album et nigrum, calidum et frigidum. Remoto autem posteriori remanet prius: unde remotis qualitatibus sensibilibus secundum intellectum, adhuc remanet quantitas continua in intellectu." (*In de Anima,* III, lect. 8, n. 707.)

[26]"Forma autem illa potest a materia aliqua abstrahi, cuius ratio essentiae non dependet a tali materia . . . Unde quantitas potest intelligi in . . . substantia, antequam intelligantur in ea qualitates sensibiles, a quibus dicitur materia sensibilis; et sic secundum rationem suae substantiae non dependet quantitas a materia sensibli, sed solum a materia intelligibili. Substantia enim remotis accidentibus non manet nisi intellectu comprehensibilis, eo quod sensibiles potentiae non pertingunt usque as substantiae comprehensionem." (*In Libr. Boeth. de Trin.,* q. 5, a. 3, resp.) "Species autem mathematicae possunt abstrahi per intellectum a materia sensibili non solum individuali, sed etiam communi; non tamen a materia intelligibili communi, sed solum individuali . . . Unde quantitates . . . possunt considerari absque qualitatibus, sensibilibus, quod est eas abstrahi a materia sensibili; non tamen possunt considerari sine intellectu substantiae quantitati subiectae, quod esset eas abstrahi a materia intelligibili communi. Possunt tamen considerari sine hac vel illa substantia; quod est eas abstrahi a materia intelligibili individuali." (*Summa Theologica,* I, q. 85, a. 1, ad. 2. Cf. *In de Anima,* III, lect. 8, n. 708.)

intelligible in the line of understandableness, though dependent on individual sensible matter in the line of existence.

We can take the name "abstraction" which primarily signifies a kind of simple apprehension and transfer it to signify those perfections in real objects which in their whatness and understandableness are, in diverse degrees, independent of individual sensible matter and are thus foundations in nature for our conceiving these material beings more or less removed from individual sensible matter. By an abstraction (formally taken) of a whole from individual sensible matter we attain the first degree of abstraction (fundamentally taken). By an abstraction (formally taken) of form from sensible matter we attain the second degree of abstraction (fundamentally taken).

Beyond Physics

The question now arises: by another abstraction formally and properly understood, can we contact in the concrete objects of experience another perfection still more independent of individual sensible matter in its whatness and understandableness? To answer this question we must first decide whether there is in natural beings a third perfection in itself independent of matter and then whether this perfection is attained by abstraction or some other act of the mind.

In seeking the extrinsic causes of the motion of natural beings we are ultimately led to unmoved movers outside the sphere of material being. What do we know about these unmoved movers? We know that they *are* and that they are *not like the material beings* whose source of motion they are. These movers are *beings,* and are *immaterial* beings.[27]

Prior to our demonstration of the existence of these unmoved movers "being" means only one things to us, material being, the proper object of our human intellect. No matter how furiously we might strip an experienced object of matter—of individual sensible matter, of common sensible matter, of individual intelligible matter — even if we strip common intelligible matter of quantity — the mind by its first operation would still know only material being. For anything determined, any form, accidental or substantial, that we can abstract from experience, in its very

[27]"Antiqui enim non opinabantur aliquam substaniam esse praeter substantiam corpoream mobilem, de qua physicus tractat. Et ideo creditum est, quod soli determinent de tota natura, et per consequens de ente; et ita etiam de primis principiis quae sunt simul consideranda cum ente. Hoc autem falsum est; quia adhuc est quaedam scientia superior naturali: ipsa enim natura, idest res naturalis habens in se principium motus, in se ipsa est unum aliquod genus entis universalis. Non enim omne ens est huiusmodi: cum probatum sit in octavo Physicorum, esse aliquod ens immobile. Hoc autem ens immobile superius est et nobilius ente mobili, de quo considerat naturalis." (*In Meta.,* IV, lect. 5, n. 593.) ". . . sed possumus hoc modo de substantiis separatis aliquo modo cognoscere quia sunt; sicut per effectus deficientes devenimus in causas excellentes, ut cognoscamus de eis tantum quia sunt; et dum cognoscimus quia sunt causae excellentes, scimus de eis quia non sunt tales quales sunt earum effectus; et hoc est scire de eis magis quid non sunt quam quid sunt." (St. Thomas, *De Anima Quaestio Unica,* art. 16, near end of body of art.)

whatness and consequent understandableness, depends on matter, secondary or primary.[28]

But after our discovery of the existence of unmoved movers, which we know are *beings* and *immaterial* beings, the word "being" takes on a new significance for us.[29] "To be" signifies a perfection proportionally one that is found in material beings and in immaterial beings.[30] Being is a perfection that is most deeply rooted in material beings, for obviously they exist; yet in its whatness and understandableness being is entirely independent of matter, for that perfection of being is also most deeply rooted in the immaterial unmoved movers which physics demonstrates actually exist. There is, therefore, in the concrete material objects that surround us a third set of perfections which in themselves are entirely independent of matter – being, unity, act, etc.[31]

We contact this entirely independent perfection latent in the things we see, not by abstraction, but by separation or negative judgment, the kind of distinction found in the second act of the mind. A conclusion of

---

[28]"Manifestum est enim quod anima humana potest abstrahere a rebus materialibus quidditates earum, et intelligere eas; hoc enim contingit quoties intelligimus de aliqua re materiali quid est. Si igitur illa quidditas abstracta non est quidditas pura, sed etiam res habens quidditatem, iterum intellectus noster potest abstrahere illam; et cum non potest procedere in infinitum devenietur ad hoc quod intelligat aliquam simplicem quidditatem; et per ejus considerationem intellectus noster intelliget substantias separatas, quia nihil aliud sunt quam quaedam simplices quidditates. Sed haec ratio omnino est insufficiens. Primo quidem, quia quidditates rerum materialium sunt alterius generis a quidditatibus separatis, et habent alium modum essendi; unde per hoc quod intellectus noster intelligit quidditates rerum materialium, non sequitur quod intelligat quidditates separatas. Item diversae quidditates intellectae differunt specie; et inde est quod etiam qui intelligit quidditatem unius rei materialis, non intelligit quidditatem alterius; non enim qui intelligit quid est lapis intelligit quid est animal. Unde data quod quidditates separatae essent ejusdem rationis cum quidditatibus materialibus non sequeretur quod qui intelligit has quidditates rerum materialium, intelligeret substantias separates . . ." (*loc. cit.;* cf. also *ibid.*, ad 5; *Summa Theologica,* I, q. 88, a. 2; *De Veritate,* q. 28, a 5, ad 6; *Summa Contra Gentiles,* III, chap. 41.)

[29]". . . si non est aliqua alia substantia praeter eas quae consistunt secundum naturam, de quibus est physica, physica erit prima scientia. Sed. si est aliqua substantia immobilis, ista erit prior substantia naturali; et per consequens philosophia considerans hujusmodi substantiam, erit philosophia prima." (*In Meta.,* VI, lect. 1, n. 1170; cf. text quoted in note 27.)

[30]"Et ideo naturalis scientia considerat solum de substantiis sensibilibus, inquantum sunt in actu et in motu. Et ideo tam de his etiam quam de substantiis immobilibus considerat haec scientia [metaphysica], inquantum communicant in hoc quod sunt entia et substantiae." (*In Meta.,* XII, lect. 2, n. 2427; *ibid.,* VI, lect. 1, n. 1165.)

[31]". . . dupliciter potest esse aliquid a materia et motu separatum secundum esse: uno modo sic quod de ratione ipsius rei, quae separata dicitur, sit quod nullo modo in materia et motu esse possit, sicut Deus et angeli dicuntur a materia et motu separati; alio modo sic, quod non sit de ratione eius, quod sit in materia et motu, sed possit esse sine materia et motu, quamvis quandoque inveniatur in materia et motu, et sic ens et substantia et potentia et actus sunt separata a materia et motu, quia secundum esse a materia et motu non dependent . . ." (*In Libr. Boeth. De Trin.,* q. 5, a. 4, resp.) ". . . ens et substantia dicuntur separata a materia et motu non per hoc quod de ratione ipsorum sit esse sine materia et motu, sicut de ratione asini est sine ratione esse, sed per hoc quod de ratione eorum non esse in materia et motu, quamvis quandoque sint in materia et motu, sicut animal abstrahit a ratione, quamvis aliquod animal sit rationale." (*ibid.,* ad 5.)

a demonstration at the end of our study of material beings is that "not every being is of this kind [material]," i.e., some beings, the unmoved movers, are *im*-material.[32] By a negative judgment, therefore, being is separated from the material and attributed to the immaterial, the unmoved movers, which are positively immaterial.[33] Faced now with the reality of two modes of being, material and immaterial, we again judge, "It is not of the whatness of being itself to be material or immaterial." This second negative judgment separates being from matter, not to assert it of the immaterial as opposed to the material, but to recognize that the perfection of being in itself, while most intimate to the material, transcends the material to embrace in its analogous unity the absolutely immaterial.[34]

Thus resting upon the demonstration in physics of the reality of positively immaterial beings, we can by separation from material being and immaterial being discover even in the material objects of our world a third perfection entirely independent of matter in its whatness, a perfection which offers us a key to all reality.

The Third Degree of Abstraction

We cannot apply the name "abstraction" to this third intrinsically immaterial perfection found in physical objects on the grounds that it is a foundation for an act of abstraction in the strict sense of that word. Abstraction most properly signifies a distinction between two things which necessarily exist together as one. Being and perfections proper to being do or can exist independently of the material objects in which they happen to exist and from which they are distinguished by separation.

But since the other two degrees of intrinsically immaterial perfection in physical objects have been called degrees of abstraction, and since this third degree of perfection shares with the other two the common trait of being a foundation for our conceiving these natural things more or less removed from individual sensible matter, this third perfection can be denominated the third degree of abstraction.

Since separation shares with abstraction the common characteristic of distinguishing or removing a perfection from individual sensible mat-

---

[32]Cf. note 27.

[33]God and angels are said to be positively immaterial because they simply cannot be in matter and motion. Being, unity, act, potency, etc. are said to be negatively immaterial because though found in matter and motion their very nature does not demand that they be found only there, nor does it demand that they be found only separated from matter and motion.

[34]Cf. texts quoted in note 31. Cf. also L.-B. Geiger, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-23, 27-28.

"Substantia autem, quae est materia intelligibilis quantitatis, potest esse sine quantitate. Unde considerare substantiam sine quantitate magis pertinet ad genus separationis quam abstractionis.

Sic ergo in operatione intellectus . . . distinctio invenitur . . . secundum operationem intellectus componentis et dividentis, quae separatio dicitur proprie, et haec competit scientiae divinae sive metaphysicae . . ." (*In Libr. Boeth. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 3, resp.)

ter, separation can be called abstraction.[35] Then we must distinguish between negative abstraction and positive abstraction. Negative abstraction is abstraction most strictly, the consideration of one thing without a consideration of another existing together with the former. It is negative because that from which something is properly abstracted is simply *not* considered. Positive abstraction is not properly abstraction, but is separation or negative judgment, in which we consider the perfection distinguished together with that from which it is distinguished and the distinction between the two. It is positive because that from which the perfection is removed is considered together with the perfection and the distinction.[36]

Total and Formal Abstraction

By abstraction or separation we know perfections in themselves independent of matter according to three degrees. We have concepts of human nature, of triangles, of being and substance. But we must distinguish in our concepts between the things signified by them and the manner of signifying. As to the manner of signifying, we signify things sometimes in the abstract or as parts, sometimes in the concrete or as wholes. "Man" and "humanity" both signify the same reality, the essence of man or human nature, but they signify this in different ways. "Humanity" signifies that by which man is man to the complete exclusion of anything extraneous to that perfection by which man is man, such as individual matter in which humanity is realized to constitute Socrates or Plato. "Humanity" thus signifies only a part of Socrates, for it does not signify his individual matter, and as a part it can not be predicated of Socrates the whole. We do not say, "Socrates is humanity." "Man" signifies that by which man is man but implicitly and indistinctly it also

---

[35]So St. Thomas in *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 85, a. 1, ad. 1: "Dicendum quod abstrahere contingit dupliciter. Uno modo, per modum compositionis et divisionis; sicut cum intelligimus aliquid non esse in alio, vel esse separatum ab eo. Alio modo, per modum simplicitatis; sicut cum intelligimus unum, nihil considerando de alio."

[36]"Potest autem aliquis absolvi ab ordine ad aliud dupliciter: uno modo mere negative, accipiendo unum omni alio suppresso vel omisso, ad quod poterat ordinari; alio modo privative seu positive, quia accipit unum separando ab alio cum cognitione utriusque termini. Hinc nascitur duplex abstractio, alia negativa, alia positiva. Negativa concipit unam naturam omissis conditionibus individuantibus et circa illas negative se habendo. Abstractio positiva est illa, quae separat naturam a conditionibus non pure omittendo et relinquendo individua seu differentias individuales, sed cognoscendo id, quod relinquit et id, quod assumit, et consequenter cognoscendo distinctionem inter unum et aliud." (John of St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, Log., II P., q. 4, a. 2 [I, 347 b 28-48 ed. Reiser]; cf. *ibid.*, q. 3, a. 5 [I, 335 a 41-b 17].) ". . . cum dicitur ens esse primo cognitum . . . non sumitur ens, ut subest abstractioni positivae, sive formali sive totali, sicut de illo tractat Metaphysica, sed ut concipitur secundum se et sub abstractione negativa, qualis etiam potest contingere in sensu, qui accipit unum omisso alio, v. g. colorem in pomo omisso sapore . . ." (*ibid.*, Phil. Nat., I P., q. 1, a. 3 [II, 31 a 5-15].)

It should be noted that St. Thomas himself commonly speaks of two abstractions in the formal sense of the word. Cf. L.-B. Geiger's article, previously cited, in which it is shown that St. Thomas abandoned the idea of a threefold abstraction in favor of a threefold distinction to explain the acts attaining the objects of the different sciences. The article also resolves the difficulties of the one passage (*Summa Theol.*, I, q. 85, a. 1, ad. 1 and 2) in the writings of St. Thomas which seems to militate most strongly in favor of three abstractions formally understood.

signifies individual matter in which the perfection of human nature is realized, i.e. "man" signifies a subject having human nature. In virtue of this fact "man" virtually signifies the whole Socrates and can be predicated of him. We do say, "Socrates is a man." In general, perfections concretely conceived are universal wholes, predicable of the particulars from which they are derived, whereas these same perfections abstractly conceived simply put the mind in contact with what is perfect, formal, determined in things.[37]

To abstract human nature from Socrates and Plato and to conceive it in a concrete concept, to conceive it as a universal *whole* predicable of Socrates and Plato, is to make a *total* abstraction. To abstract human nature from these two gentlemen and to conceive it in an abstract concept, to conceive that *formality,* that determination in virtue of which they are men, with complete precision from anything extraneous to that perfection is to make a *formal* abstraction. Taking abstraction in the strict sense, we find total and formal abstraction attaining the first degree of fundamental abstraction.[38]

Likewise, by total abstraction we conceive triangle, by formal, triangularity in the second degree of abstraction. By total positive abstraction we conceive negatively immaterial being and substance, by formal positive abstraction, negatively immaterial being-as-such and substantiality in the third degree of abstraction.[39]

---

[37]Cf. *De Ente et Essentia,* chap. III, near the end.

[38]"Unde D. Thomas 1. p. q. 39. art. 4. et 5. monet in proprietatibus locutionum et ad veritatem earum non solum considerari debere res significates, sed etiam modum significandi, qui modus praecipue relucet in hoc, quod significetur aliquid in abstracto vel in concreto, per modum totius vel partis . . . Unde D. Thomas opusc. 69. [*In Libr. Boethii de Hebdomadibus,* lect. 2] . . . inquit, 'quod circa quocumque abstracte consideratum hoc habet veritatem, quod non habet in se aliquid extraneum, quod scilicet sit praeter essentiam suam, sicut humanitas et albedo et quaecumque hoc modo dicuntur . . . Aliter autem se habet in iis, quae significanter in concreto . . . homo et album possunt aliquid aliud habere quam humanitatem vel albedinem . . . .'

Ex qua doctrina colliges. quod abstractum respectu concreti abstrahit abstractione formali, non totali. Vocatur abstractio formalis, qua forma abstrahit a materia, actus a potentia, essentiale et proprium ab extraneo et alieno. Abstractio autem totalis est, qua superius abstrahit ab inferiori et commune ab individuis, quia habet se ut totum respectu inferioris includendo illa virtualiter et implicite. Abstractum autem formale non se habet ut totum respectu concreti, sed ut pars et quasi forma et actus respectu potentiae et subiecti." (John of St. Thomas, *op. cit.,* Log., II P., q. 5, a. 2 [I, 358 a 3-b 18]; cf. *ibid.,* 359 a 25-b 10.)

[39]In his commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate* St. Thomas calls the abstraction attaining the first degree of objective immateriality not only abstraction of the whole from its parts in contradistinction to that of form from matter, but also abstraction of the universal from the particular. When speaking thus St. Thomas is viewing the abstraction of the whole nature from its parts not as it attains the formality resident in the many parts to the exclusion of the parts, but as it attains the formality while implicitly containing the parts. St. Thomas is concerned in these questions of his commentary with the relationship to matter of the various formalities attained by the mind. Since the formalities are found both by total abstraction and formal abstraction, in concrete concepts and in abstract concepts, St. Thomas generally has no need to bother about which mode of abstraction or conception he is employing in discussing the central problem and in giving examples.

Again denominating the perfections rooted in things by the acts for which they offer foundations, we can speak of total and formal abstraction (fundamental) in each of the three degrees of fundamental abstraction.

Conclusion

To summarize and to conclude our thoughts we briefly answer our original questions. The phrase "three degrees of abstraction" most properly signifies three objective foundations in things making possible their conceptualization at different levels of immateriality. "Abstraction" in the phrase is to be understood fundamentally.

Negative abstraction is abstraction most strictly, the consideration of one thing without a consideration of another existing with the former. Positive abstraction is not properly abstraction, but it is separation or negative judgment, in which we consider the perfection distinguished together with that from which it is distinguished and the distinction between the two.

Total abstraction formally is a simple apprehension of a perfection as a universal whole. Formal abstraction formally is a simple apprehension of a perfection with complete precision from anything extraneous to the perfection. Both total and formal abstraction understood fundamentally are found in each of the three degrees of abstraction.

Christopher Kiesling, O.P.

BASIL, BISHOP-MONK

EVEN IN the waning days of the Empire and at its outermost boundaries, the Roman Praetorian Prefects were still important, proud men—and Modestus was such a Prefect. Young and commanding, he knew his business and did it well, partly because of his admiration for the Emperor Valens and partly because he was a confirmed Arian. Neither his Emperor nor his Arianism would permit slackness, and Modestus had no desire to displease either.

That is why he found himself one day in the year 371 in the capital city of Caesarea in Cappadocia. He and the cohort with him had that day arrived from Ancyra to the west on another leg of their long, dusty trip to Antioch; and they were tired.

It was not an easy task the Emperor had ordered, but then, neither was it easy for Valens himself. Both of them were making the south-easterly sweep from Constantinople to Antioch, but their respective companies were separated by two or three days journey. This was part of Valen's plan. Modestus was to precede him, setting the stage in each town along the way to ease, so to speak, the Emperor's business when he should arrive. His business was not at all pleasant for the people concerned; for Valens was out to destroy what remained of the orthodox Catholic Church in that beleaguered, confused, heresy-ridden corner of the world. His plan was simple enough; the matter was put as an ultimatum to each Catholic bishop along the way: either join our Arian ranks and repudiate Nicea or lose your bishoprics and be banished from Asia Minor. It was as simple as that.

What is more, the plan was working. Many bishops had from fear already embraced the heresy; others (were their names Stepanac, Beran?) held fast to orthodoxy and were exiled.

A new bishop ruled Caesarea when Modestus arrived and he saw no reason why things should not be concluded quickly and smoothly. He laid his cards squarely on the bishop's table, anticipating no trouble at all. But there was trouble; a lot of it. His smooth talk made no impression; his threats sounded absurd; the bishop refused to yield. He was orthodox and so he intended to remain!

> "What do you mean, bishop! You alone stand up against so great a prince when the others yield!" It was a very surprised Modestus.
>
> "What did you think I would do?", answered the bishop, "And just exactly what have I done wrong? You have yet to tell me."

"You are not worshipping as the Emperor desires, that is what is wrong."

"I have a Sovereign," said the bishop, "whose will is otherwise. I cannot bring myself to worship any creature – I who am a creature and commanded to be a god."

"What do you take me for?" Imagine this reactionary hidden in the center of this barbarous country telling me he is commanded to be a *god!*"

"As long as you give me such commands, I take you for nothing at all!"

"Is it, then, a mere nothing for one like *you* to have rank equal to mine – and to be my friend?"

"You are a Prefect and in a high place," the bishop admitted. "Still, the majesty of God is greater than your's. It *is* good for me to have your fellowship for we are both God's creatures. But it is just as good for me to be fellow to any other of my flock, for Christianity lies not in distinction of persons, but in faith."

The veneer of Modestus' diplomacy was deeply scratched. He bound up from his chair and glowered at the thin, evidently sickly bishop, demanding whether or not he feared his power.

"What do I have to fear?"

"One of the many pains a Prefect can inflict!"

"Name them."

"Confiscation, exile, torture, death!"

"Do you have any others?" calmly the bishop asked; "these do not impress me. In the first place, all I own are these few books and the garments I wear and you are welcome to confiscate them. As for exile, there is none for the Christian. Everywhere is God's home and that is where we live. Nor can tortures harm a body so weak as mine; most probably the first blow would kill me and death would be my gain. It would but send me sooner to Him for whom I live and labor, to whom I have always been journeying."

"No one," Modestus admitted after a silence, "no one has ever had the courage to speak so plainly to me."

"Perhaps that is because you never before met a real bishop, for if you had, you certainly would have heard such talk. Prefect, do you not realize that in other matters we are gentle and humble people, more so than all other men? But when God's honor is at stake, we can think of nothing else because we see only Him! Fire and sword, the beasts, irons which tear the flesh, are not a terror to the Christian; they are a blessing! Insult me if you wish, threaten, do your worst – and by all means inform the Emperor that I refuse to be moved. You shall never persuade me or conquer me to your impious creed!"[1]

Quite obviously nothing more was to be said; Valens would himself have to handle this proud fellow. Thus the Prefect left, silent, erect, but secretly respectful of this difficult bishop – and Basil the Great, man of letters, monk, bishop, saint, himself firmly closed the door behind Modestus.

The Beginnings

Who was this unflinching bishop, the man whom now we call St. Basil the Great? When did he live, where, *why*? Why should we twentieth-century Catholics concern ourselves about a man whose deeds are dimmed by history, whose life was spent in a land thousands of

[1]*Oratio* 43. Cf. John Cardinal Newman, *Historical Sketches* (London: Longman, Green and Company, 1917), II, pp. 9-11. Unless otherwise noted, all letters of Sts. Basil and Gregory in this article are translations by Cardinal Newman.

miles from modern America, whose very membership in the Oriental Church bespeaks his remoteness, his strangeness? The following pages may answer briefly some of these questions.

It is not the whole story merely to say that he is a saint, a doctor of the Church, and then let it go at that. To do this would be to begin his story at its climax. Men are not born saints or Church doctors; certainly Basil was not. A whole wealth of spirit and matter went into his fashioning; fifty years of intense loving and heartbreaking misunderstandings, minor successes and seemingly total failures, comedy and sadness – these are all a part of Basil's story.

Basil was forty-one years old when the interview with Modestus took place, but he looked much older. The years before his episcopal election had been full ones, varied in their activity and purpose; each of them was eventually to contribute to the final stature of the man who refused to yield to the times. And well they did; for his role as bishop was to be a decisive one, demanding that he be well prepared. The terrible ravages of heresy, constant and personal attacks from enemies, these were to require of the bishop of Caesarea courage, deep faith and greatness of heart. Basil had these qualities.

Born in 329, Basil grew up in a family climate of religious faith and classical learning. His father, also named Basil (in Greek the word means 'kingly'), had been a celebrated professor of rhetoric in Caesarea, then a city of four hundred thousand people and a center for learning. His mother, Emmelia – the mother of ten children – had been a model of Christian virtue; her religious training traced itself back to her own parents – her father was martyred in an earlier persecution – and further back to the wonder-worker, St. Gregory.

His home life left nothing to be desired. The family was moderately wealthy and accustomed, it seems, to the honors and powers of a ruling class. Annually they gave a set portion of the family funds, still plentiful despite the losses from persecution, to Church charities. The children were educated in the arts and religious faith and, judging from the results, we must say they had good teachers. For three of the family's ten children, so the Latin Church reckons, are today canonized saints; Basil; his brother, Gregory of Nyssa; and his eldest sister, Macrina. The Oriental Church, however, counts the entire family in its catalogue of saints, reminiscent of a later day when another family, that of Bernard of Citeaux, was likewise to "overtake Christ."

Basil lived in Caesarea until he was twenty and then decided to go to Constantinople for further study. He had already made excellent progress in philosophy and rhetoric; now new fields for conquering drew him to that fantastic city on the Bosporus. It is easy to imagine the great attraction this romantic city must have had upon him. Like Rome, it stands on seven hills and spills itself along the narrow Bosporus into two continents, so that the poetic East and the prosaic West meet there in riotous color and sound – and smells.

Besides being the seat of government for the Eastern Roman Empire — then the Throne-City of Constantine and Valens — it was also the home of famous scholars. It was under these that Basil spent a year of study. With the year ended, and seeking still more knowledge, Basil left for Athens. Here it was that Basil was to remain four years and here a new phase of his life began. For at Athens to his great happiness he discovered a life-long, intimate friend, another saint, Gregory Nazianzus. Then began what was perhaps one of the loftiest friendships ever recorded of saints. Gregory, whose home Nazianzus was not far from Basil's native Caesarea,[2] had been first to arrive in the scholastic center but in a short time Basil was his equal in the admiration and respect of their fellow students.

Through the years in Athens, these two were inseparable, sharing common joys and secret hopes — and planning for the future. Strange to say, their plans centered around asceticism. For it seems that both students felt themselves attracted to spiritual perfection and instinctively, for both of them, this meant a life of asceticism. Athens, then, could not give full happiness. In a letter, Basil called Athens a "hollow blessedness" and when four years had passed he was determined to leave. His searching journey would have to begin again, prompted by his growing desire to abandon the world with its nothingness and defilements. And where would his journey end?

It might be more accurate to ask, how would it begin? For leaving Athens was not easy; it was almost impossible. The friends and companions had heard about Basil and Gregory leaving and tried by entreaties, arguments, and even by violence to prevent it, so much did they want them to remain. Cardinal Newman, in his *Historical Sketches,* points to this occasion to contrast the respective dispositions of the two friends. Basil refused to be moved by the show of friendship; he persevered and left Athens. Gregory, "the tender-hearted," on the other hand, softened and stayed on another year.

Actually this characteristic difference marked the remainder of their lives and was the cause, later, of a brief but unfortunate coolness between them, and, later still, of a permanent break in their relationship. Basil was even then the man of "firm resolve and hard deeds."

Basil the Monk

"Home is the Victor!" — so must have been Basil's thought when he returned to Caesarea. News of his brilliant Grecian success had won the race home and Lady Fame was waiting. It was a case, as we would say, of local boy makes good — and fittingly so. He was in the prime of young manhood, learned and virtuous, combining a warm, sensitive soul with a firmness of character — and now he was a man with a purpose. His townspeople lost no time in asking him to become a professor in their schools. Well they did, for other towns, like Neo-Caesarea to the north,

---

[2]Ancient Nazianzus today is the modern village of Nenizi, east of Ak-serai (formerly Archelais), approximately 70 miles from Caesarea, the modern Kayseri.

were also asking for his services. Basil, nevertheless, accepted the home-town offer and began his teaching career, a career which did not last very long.

For no sooner had he come home than he fell quite completely under the religious charm of his eldest sister Macrina. During his years at Athens, she and a group of similarly-minded women had begun to live the ascetical life on a portion of the family estate in wild, northern Pontus, just below the Black Sea. Macrina, a truly remarkable woman about whom much could be written, was alarmed at the effect Basil's success was having; was it a touch of pride she noticed, or worldliness, perhaps preoccupation with vain and comparatively unimportant speculations? How could this be when the Truth stood waiting to be seen and loved? She would have to speak to him about this, and she did! The result seems to have been inevitable:

> After a long time spent in vanity, and almost the whole of my youth vanishing in the idle toil of studying that wisdom which God has made folly, when at length, roused as from a deep sleep (by God's grace and his sister's solicitude), I gazed upon the marvelous light of Gospel truth, and discerned the unprofitableness of the wisdom taught by the perishing authorities of this world, much did I bewail my wretched life, and pray that guidance would be vouchsafed me for an entrance into the doctrine of godliness. And above all was it a care to me to reform my heart, which the long society of the corrupt had perverted.[3]

Basil seems never to have doubted that this "doctrine of godliness" would never be his unless he accepted quite literally the counsel of Christ to "go sell what thou hast and give to the poor and come, follow me."[4]

But where begin, and how? What method should he follow? Already in Asia Minor zealous men were living severely austere lives as hermits, or even in common. Basil knew this, but he seems to have wanted to see at first hand, in Egypt, in Palestine and Coele-Syria, the methods the great pioneers Antony and Pachomius had instituted there with considerable success. Monk already in heart, Basil consequently began a year of travel which took him south through these mystic lands, ending at length at the Nile.

The famous Antony was then a short time dead. This remarkable man had begun his ascetical life at 21 (he was born in 251), living for fifteen years on the outskirts of his native town. But this did not provide enough solitude so he went to the only place that would — the desert south of Alexandria. His new, remote and hard life, instead of assuring isolation, had exactly the opposite effect. For many seekers after God were attracted to this desert-hermit and would not permit him rest until he promised to teach them the secrets of his life. Antony acquiesced and for ever his solitude was lost.

---

[3]St. Basil's letter to Eustathius, Bishop of Sebaste, *P. G.*, XXXII, 823; cf. Newman, *op. cit.*, II, p. 21.

[4]Matt. 9:21.

His institutions Basil saw and admired, and those of Pachomius, too. Basil wrote in a letter his impressions of this trip:

> When I read the Gospel, and perceived thence that the best start towards perfection was to sell my goods and share them with my indigent brethren, and altogether to be reckless of this life, and to rid my soul of all sympathy with things on earth, I earnestly desired to find some brother who had made the same choice and who might make the passage with me over the brief waves of this life. Many did I find in Alexandria, many in the rest of Egypt, and in Palestine, in Coele-Syria and Mesopotamia, whose abstinence and endurance I admired, and whose constancy in prayer I was amazed at; how they overcame sleep, in spite of the necessity of nature, bearing ever a high and free spirit in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness . . . how they showed in deed what it is to be sojourners in this world, what it is to have our conversation in heaven. Admiring and extolling the life of these men, who could so in deed carry about with them the dying of the Lord Jesus, I desired that I myself, as far as I could attain, might be an imitator of them.[5]

In 358 (he now was 29), having seen the exemplars and eager to begin similar paths, Basil returned to Asia Minor and immediately retired to Pontus, very near, it seems, to his sister's monastery, but in a wilder, more inaccessible place. Judging from Gregory's description of it, Basil choose the very end of the world to begin his ascetical life! Basil had invited Gregory to join him in his new venture, reminding him of the promises made at Athens. Gregory hesitated, claiming that his father, then bishop of Nazianzus, needed his aid in administering the diocese. But Basil insisted and Gregory was unable to say no. To attract him Basil had painted his retreat in glowing terms:

> There is a lofty mountain, covered with thick woods, watered towards the north with cool and transparent streams. A plain lies beneath, enriched by the waters which are ever draining off upon it; and skirted by a spontaneous profusion of trees almost thick enough to be a fence . . . Indeed it is like an island, enclosed as it is on all sides; for deep hollows cut it off in two directions; the river . . . runs along one side and is impassable as a wall; while the mountain, extending itself behind and meeting the hollows in a crescent, stops up the path at its root. There is but one pass and I am master of it![6]

He goes on to describe the spotted fish, the cool breezes and above all, the absolute absence of city bustle; "here, at the edge of the world, we enjoy a solitude abundant and bountiful." The only distraction, he warned, may be a chance hunter who has lost his way. But Gregory had quite a different picture to paint. In the first place, the building had no roof and no doors; there was no fire in the hearth; the food was unpalatable. "I have remembrance of the bread and the broth — so they were called — and shall always remember them! But for me, unless that true Lady Bountiful, your mother, had rescued me quickly, showing herself in need like a haven to the tempest-tost, I'd have been dead

[5]Letter to Eustathius, *loc. cit.*
[6]Letter to Gregory, no. 14, *P.G.*, XXXII, 275-8; cf. Newman *op. cit.*, II, p. 59.

long ago, getting myself little honor, though much pity, from Pontic hospitality!"[7]

Although offended slightly by Gregory's not-so-playful opinion of his retreat, Basil determined to live on there. And it is to this time that historians attribute many of Basil's letters and the monastic rule which he formulated and which was to become the guide for St. Benedict's later monastic foundation in the Western Church. They were happy years at Pontus, hard, disciplined, satisfying; but they ended abruptly in 360 when Basil was called to attend the Council of Constantinople.

This marked the beginning of another new phase, the last, of Basil's life. Events were forcing him from Pontic solitude to public controversy and defense of the Church. He was about to become the fighter, the controversialist and, although he was to return to Pontus for a few years, the remaining course of his life was being plotted along very different lines.

It was also at this time, 360, that certain other events occurred in Basil's life which should be briefly mentioned here. In the first place, Basil felt obliged to break off relations with his bishop, Dianius, who had signed the heretical formulary of the Council of Ariminum; for two years the breach endured until on his deathbed Dianius sent for Basil and to him he solemnly professed his orthodoxy. This occasion had brought him to Caesarea and permitted him to be present at the election of Dianius' successor, a certain Eusebius, about whom little is known. Eusebius was orthodox but he was hardly a competent theologian. He himself realized this but he realized too that Basil's reputation as a theologian was rapidly spreading and the bishop appears to have become jealous of his rising junior. Basil, at Gregory's suggestion, fearing that two factions were about to develop in the Church at Caesarea, one around the bishop the other around Basil, decided to leave the city and return to Pontus. He returned to Pontus this time as a priest, for it appears that Eusebius ordained Basil before he became excessively suspicious and jealous of him.

But again in 365, with serious and open strife threatened by Valens, the bishop felt the need of Basil at his side and subsequently recalled him. Gregory appears again here momentarily as the reconciler between the two, the same role he had filled previously between Basil and Dianius. Fortunately, Valens' imminent attack on Caesarea was diverted by the more pressing business of quelling a rising revolt elsewhere. Though the immediate danger had then passed, Basil stayed on with Eusebius, loyally upholding his authority and increasing the powers of the see.

In 370 Eusebius died and Basil was elected in his place, but not without incident. A group of bishops within the jurisdiction of Caesarea did not want Basil; they feared his firm discipline and unyielding orthodoxy (which could be embarrassing in these times) and they fought his elec-

[7]Letter to Basil, no. 5, *P.G.*, XXXVII, 27-30; cf. Newman, *op. cit.*, II, p. 61.

tion. Even a certain lay-group headed by Basil's uncle was against him; but despite these, Basil ascended the archiepiscopal throne in the year of Our Lord 370, when he was in his forty-first year. It was shortly after this that Modestus knocked on his door. And not only Modestus but later Valens too, as was expected. A record of Valens' conversation with Basil seems not to have been made but this much we do know: Basil was not banished; he remained orthodox; he ruled his see until his very death. Evidently the same door of heroic resistance Basil closed behind Modestus he closed also behind Valens.

Basil the Bishop

In every age the Church faces trials and crises which seem to be Her downfall. Today the dread is Communism; in the time of Pope St. Pius V, the threatened loss of Western Civilization at the hands of the Turks; in Basil's time it was Arianism. These are the conflicts the militant Church was promised by her Founder and which She quite naturally expects. Cardinal Newman has put it very well:

> What is ecclesiastical history but a record of the ever doubtful fortune of the battle, though its issue is not doubtful? Scarcely are we singing *Te Deum,* when we have to turn to our *Misereres;* scarcely are we in peace, when we are in persecution; scarcely have we gained a triumph, when we are visited by a scandal. Nay, we make progress by means of reverses; our griefs are our consolations; we lose Stephen to gain Paul, and Matthias replaces the traitor Judas.[8]

The fourth century was a time for the *Miserere* for it had its Judases, its persecutions and scandals; yet happily it had its Pauls. Oustanding men like Basil, Gregory Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Athanasius, John Chrysostom — all the glory of Asia Minor; Jerome in the East, Augustine in Africa, Ambrose at Milan, St. Martin of Tours in France — all raised by Divine Providence to fight and defend the Church in its crises.

Basil's letters reveal his knowledge of the chaos of the day. He knew that as bishop his whole being must work for Church unity, the absence of which cut him deeply:

> The doctrines of godliness are overturned; the rules of the Church are in confusion . . . unbelievers laugh at what they see and the weak are unsettled; faith is doubtful, ignorance is poured over their souls . . . religious people keep silence but every blaspheming tongue is let loose.[9]

One such tongue charged Basil with heresy, seeking to discredit him — our modern smear campaign — and Basil was profoundly hurt by this. The insidious tale of the smear circulated widely and reached Gregory in Nazianzus, who, although he did not believe it, asked Basil for an explanation. That his friend should have need for an explanation of such a perverse charge totally surprised and irritated the bishop, complicating still more their already strained relationship.

---

[8]*Op. cit.,* II, p. 1.

[9]Letter to the Bishops of Italy and Gaul, no. 92, *P.G.,* XXXII, 479; cf. Newman, *op. cit.,* p. 43.

As the years passed the sorrows increased: Valens' clever move (in 371) dividing Cappadocia in half in order to lessen Basil's jurisdiction; Basil's irreconcilable misunderstanding with Gregory; the complete ignoring of Basil's requests for mediating help by the western bishops and even by the pope himself – all these trials sorely tried the faith and hope of the man. Add to these his continual ill health, for Basil seems never to have been a fully well man. Many times his illness would confine him to bed for long periods; as he admitted in a letter to a friend, "by reason of my infirmities, I am, I may almost say, like a plant, always held in the same place."[10] At other times his sickness lingered threateningly in the background.

Finally the worn out body and tired soul could take no more; only fifty years old, Basil was a sickly, seemingly beaten man. He could look back and see some progress; yes, his clergy had become a model of what priests should be; holy orders were being administered only to worthy candidates; the laity together with the clergy knew and fulfilled their obligations – even many of those who at first resented him. What is more, he had begun a monastic rule and had prudently perfected it to the great benefit of the entire Church; in Caesarea a hospital and school and a "New City" were constructed and they became the Catholic heart of the country.

But these were only partial victories, insignificant, Basil would have called them. For he realized that the greatest challenge of all, the defeat of Arianism, he had not been able to meet and conquer – and this had been his consuming desire. He was never to see in this life the healing of the wounds which Christ in His time would effect.

Thus Basil's life seems to have had no climax, no outstanding success. This of course is not true. The universal sadness and the sense of profound loss which marked his death – on the first day of January, 379 – bespeaks success of a high order, for he died a true Father of the Church.

"Into thy hands, I commend my spirit;" these were his last words. The words of Saint Paul must have resounded on the lips of Basil's flock, uttered in testimony of him: "You have fought a good fight, you have finished your course, you have kept the faith."

Mark Sullivan, O.P.

---

[10]Letter to Maximus the Philosopher, *P.G.*, XXXII, 270; as translated by Dr. Roy J. Deferrari, Ph.D., *Collected Letters of Saint Basil* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926), p. 99.

PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

WHEN GOD uttered the words, "Let Us make man to Our image and likeness," the result was very good. Yet God's satisfaction with the work of His hands did not exclude the possibility that man was made for a further perfection than that of simply existing. In fact, man has been placed in a state of tension; he must struggle to increase the likeness of God implanted in his soul if he is to reach his full stature. This increase, this drawing closer to God can be effected only by his actions.[1] They are the means by which he accumulates the totality of perfections necessary to make him happy. Some of these activities are directed to his communication with other men and to the provision of material goods required for life. But man's most personal operations lie in the realm of knowing and loving.[2] They are at the heart of everything else he does. Made to know and love God, man shares the burden of directing himself to that end. He is thus obliged to discover and perform those actions which are good and conducive to his happiness. This fact opens up the whole field of practical knowledge.

Although it will not be possible here to place practical knowledge in its true perspective, that is, in relation to the ultimate end of man's life, we hope to determine in general some of its main characteristics. Hence, all we are looking for are the proximate causes of this knowledge, what distinguishes it from speculative knowledge.

Meaning of Terms

To facilitate this understanding, the terms 'speculative' and 'practical' should first be examined. The adjective 'speculative' is derived from a Latin verb *(speculari)* meaning 'to see in a mirror.' It denotes a simple gaze upon some object reflected on the mirror's surface. Applied to the act of knowledge, it carries the same notion of a simple consideration of some truth; not, however, with the purpose of doing anything else with the knowledge. On the other hand, the adjective 'practical,' stemming from a Greek verb *(prasso)*, always signifies something active or effective. To the modern mind whatever is practical has to be useful. And the term does apply to knowledge referred to something else, for practical knowledge is naturally directed to the realization of a work or activity.[3]

---

[1]St. Thomas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, cc. 19, 20, 21 (editio leonina manualis; Rome: Desclée et Cie, 1934).

[2]Jean Mouroux, *The Meaning of Man* (A. H. G. Downes, translator, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1948), pp. 1-4.

[3]Jean Pétrin, *Connaissance spéculative et connaissance pratique* (Ottawa: Editions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1948), pp. 17-23.

From the meanings of the terms themselves it is clear that speculative and practical knowledge have different ends. The former looks only to the consideration of truth in itself, whereas the latter goes a step further: it ordains the truth of things to the production of other things. This difference of ends is what Aristotle and St. Thomas repeatedly affirm.[4]

Underlying the divergence of ends between speculative and practical knowledge is the nature of man's intellect and the world about him. These two provide the subjective and objective foundations of his knowledge.

Man naturally thirsts for knowledge about all natural things and also for the little he can ascertain about God. But even this does not suffice. He wants to be certain of what he knows, to grasp firmly the scattered truths he can acquire. Beyond this, the mind of man struggles toward unity and order: to find it and to impose it upon things when it is lacking. To admit this is to recognize that the quest of man is for wisdom.

The distinctive trait of a wise man is to bring about order.[5] But his efforts are restrained somewhat by the very nature of things. Part of his task has already been accomplished by the Wisdom of God. All *natural* things, such as man's body, stand as masterpieces of order. The parts of his body are so joined together and subordinated to one another that nothing is left for man to do but restore their harmony when sickness disrupts it. His bodily members also have a further ordination. They subserve the needs of his soul. Thus, in nature God has so arranged the parts of things among themselves and to their end that man can only admire the result and try to discover the reasons for these two orders. His knowledge of them is merely speculative.

In the act of delving into the causes of natural things man makes many blunders. He is troubled by a more or less haphazard use of his reasoning power. Finding himself asking the wrong questions about things and frequently getting muddled when he attempts to draw conclusions, man recognizes the need of order in the *realm of thought* itself. For Aristotle the work of defining this rational order was much more experimental than it was for his followers. Profiting from his contribution, men can learn how to reason accurately and with ease.

The search for new fields to order does not lead man far from himself. His desire for happiness imposes certain restrictions on the objects he can seek out and love. Those which are only apparently good must be bypassed. The pleasure appealing to his senses must not be allowed

[4]Aristotle, *De Anima* (ed. W. D. Ross, *The Student's Oxford Aristotle;* New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), III, ch. 10. 433a, 14-20; Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* II, ch. 1, 993b, 20-22; St. Thomas, *In Aristotelis Librum De Anima Comm.* (ed. Pirotta, Turin: Marietti, 1925), III, 1. 15, n. 820; St. Thomas, *In Metaphysicam Arist. Comm.* (ed. Cathala, Turin: Marietti, 1935), II, lect. 2, n. 290.

[5]Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* I, ch. 2, 982a, 18.

to deflect his will from what is his true end. Hence, his *will* demands to be regulated and set fixedly upon God. This is one more work he can accomplish.

Lastly, there remains the conquering of the *material world.* Man needs a shelter in which to live, clothes to keep him warm, and certain tools to construct all of these necessities. By trial and error he learns to build houses and roads in the way best suited to their separate purposes, and uses them as means to further his own purpose. In the performance of these activties his mind delights in certain juxtapositions of parts and symmetry of lines. His natural desire for order is also a natural desire for beauty.

Of these four orders only the last two come under man's active dominion. The order in all natural things, and even in the acts of his intellect, is matter for speculation because it has truth and the good of man's intellect as its end. Faced with these objects, man can do no more than conform his mind to their nature and order. But the order to be traced in the acts of his will and in the material things he uses or fashions into works of beauty provides a fertile field for his efforts. These last two orders, then, constitute the objects of practical knowledge; since man endeavors to know them and how they are interrelated, principally in order to regulate or produce them.[6]

Secondly, there is a subjective foundation for this knowledge, the nature of man's intellect. Under this point we should determine how these various orders stand in relation to the peculiar good of the human intellect.

Among the things cherished by man truth ranks high. If we were to divorce the intellect from the whole man, we could state that truth is supreme. Through the medium of his intellect man has a connaturality for truth, for letting his mind be shaped by beings. In this conformity with reality he feels a sense of completion because he is using his intellect for its specific purpose. Nevertheless, not all truth brings with its possession the same delight. Only the fixed natures of things which have a necessity carved into them can give rest to the intellect hunting for certain truths. Other truths, concerning individual human actions for example, are obviously not so permanent and certain; they are in a sense unpredictable. Their contingency or liability to change cannot content the mind fully.

Having truth as its object, the human intellect strives to rise above the singular contingent events happening every day. They cannot beget absolutely certain truth in the mind due to their imperfect and changeable being.[7] The necessity impressed in the essences of things, however, can and does effect this certainty. So the intellect's chief concern will

[6]St. Thomas, *In Decem Libros Ethicorum Arist. ad Nich* (ed. Spiazzi, Turin: Marietti, 1949), I. 1. 1. nn. 1-2.

[7]*In Meta.,* II, 1. 2, n. 298; *Summa Theologica,* I, q. 79, a. 9, ad 3.

be for its more perfect good, necessary truths, and ultimately for the one Truth necessary from all aspects, God.[8]

Still, contingent[9] events and operations can scarcely be disregarded. Although they fail to satisfy the mind entirely, a knowledge of them is useful, in fact indispensable, for human living.[10] One cannot draw his conduct into line with his ultimate end unless he knows what is good for him here and now. Therefore, other motives than the exclusive good of his intellect prompt a man to apply himself to contingently true matters.

Summarily, we have seen that the acts of speculative and practical knowledge are distinguished by reason of the end or good toward which each is directed. Furthermore, speculation alone among human operations is worthy of being an end in itself,[11] because it is the best of which man is capable and the most proper to him. All other operations, though they may truly be ends, are not ultimate but intermediate ends. The knowledge of moral science, for instance, is not ordained to another act of that science; it has the act of some virtue for its end.[12] Likewise, art seeks the good of an external product.[13] In other words, the end which is the contemplation of truth remains within the intellect and perfects it without any reference to the man, whereas the end of practice, either an action or a work, primarily perfects the whole of man or an object external to him.

Speculative and Practical Intellect

Since the acts of practical and speculative knowledge differ, one may rightly ask whether or not each is produced by a specifically different intellect. Immanuel Kant thought that there were two distinct intellects in man, one practical and the other speculative. A recurrence to the principles of St. Thomas for determining the faculties of man proves the opposite to be true.

A marked order is observed between a potency, its act, and the object of that act, as obtains between the potency of sight, the act of vision, and a visible object. Sight, as something potential, is naturally inclined toward one definite act, vision. The act of hearing or smelling is entirely foreign to it. So it is the act of vision which completes the potency of sight and gives it a specific character. Vision, in turn, seeks out any objects present, yet has a certain bias for what is colored. Thus the formality of color alone can specify and render it different from hearing. The colored object, however, may be an elephant or a snail. This makes no essential difference to vision. No matter what

---

[8]*Summa Contra Gen.*, III, c. 25.

[9]*Contingent* is used here to mean the contingent *as such*, a singular existing thing. Cf. *In Ethic.*, VI, l. 1, n. 1123.

[10]*Ibid.*, II, l. 2, n. 256; VI, l. 3, n. 1152.

[11]*Summa Contra Gen.*, III, c. 25; *In Ethic.*, X, l. 12, n. 2125.

[12]St. Thomas, *In Librum Boetii De Trinitate (Opuscula Selecta;* Paris: Lethielleux, 1881), q. 5, a. 1, ad 3.

[13]*Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 57, a. 5, ad 1.

other elements are in the object, as long as it possesses the formality of color the eye picks it up. Due to this one formality the act of vision, and mediately the potency it perfects, attains a unity.[14]

Applying these notions to the intellect, we should expect only one faculty. For everything the intellect knows is seen under the formality of truth. Although the thing known may perhaps be further used to direct the realization of a work, that is accidental to the object known as such. And what is accidental or secondary in an object does not call for a separate faculty to grasp it. Therefore, insofar as what is known is viewed in the light of truth, one faculty suffices to know it. Nevertheless, when a man aims his knowledge at the different ends of speculation of practical activity, these two ends are attributed to the intellect also. Then we speak of the speculative intellect, with contemplation of truth for an end, as against the practical intellect whose end is a work or good operation.[15] The one intellect deals with truth and being from different motives: as practical, with a view to relating truth to operation; as speculative, it is content with savoring the truth possessed.[16]

In spite of the unity of the intellect itself, when it embraces necessary and contingent truths the quality of its act will be diversified. It will be modified in relation to the end or object of speculation and that of practice. While attaining everything under the common note of the true, each of these acts will demand something proper in the object it can regard as its own.[17] That which speculation desires is the possession and enjoyment of its object. Practice, or the act of practical knowledge, wants further to express its object outside the intellect. We can say then that what is proper to speculation is an object *to which it can be conformed,* and to practice, an object *to be formed* or *imitated* outside.[18] This object to be expressed, which is at once the possession of the intellect and the perfection of an impending work, constitutes the proper object of practical knowledge.[19]

Division of Practical Knowledge

From the foregoing discussion of the object and end of practical knowledge we can formulate briefly the division of such knowledge as given by St. Thomas.[20]

Knowledge can be practical from three points of view: that of the object considered, the manner of knowing it, and the end pursued. These there viewpoints are summed up in the words *radically, essentially,* and

---

[14]*In De Anima,* II, lect. 6, no. 305 ff.; *Summa Theol.,* I, q. 77, a. 3.
[15]*Summa Theol.,* I, q. 79, a. 11; *In De Anima,* III, lect. 15, no. 820.
[16]*In Meta.,* II, lect. 2, no. 290.
[17]*Summa Theol.,* I, q. 79, a. 9, ad 3.
[18]Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism* (J. F. Scanlan, translator, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), note 173, p. 174.
[19]*Summa Theol.,* I, q. 79, a. 11, ad 2.
[20]*Ibid.,* q. 14, a. 16.

perfectly.[21] The object in question evidently must be something man can make or do. Therefore, natural things and God are excluded. Secondly, this object has to be known in the precise manner in which it can be made. Mere knowledge of what a thing is with no other additions does not warrant the name practical. What is needed is a synthetic approach to the object, joining together at one and the same time what a thing is and how it can be realized in matter. Thirdly, the end renders knowledge practical. Having grasped the relationship of a form to the matter in which it can be manifested, one must elicit the intention of actually setting to work.

Since the material object of practical knowledge has been treated at some length above, we will concentrate now only on the manner and end in particular.

The manner or mode of knowing an operable thing can be brought out by comparing it to the procedure in speculative knowledge. The same object, a poplar for example, can be scrutinized both by a philosopher and by an artist. The philosopher abstracts from its particular size, color, figure, and singular existence, to form a concept of what it has in common with other trees. But for a painter the individual color and figure are of extreme importance. He wants to reproduce this individual poplar on canvas. The image he forms of it cannot abstract even from the singular existence he will bestow upon it in his painting.[22] His approach is synthetic because he is drinking in everything which belongs to the being of this tree as realisable in oils.[23] Hence, his concept of this poplar is not merely a knowing principle, as it is for the philosopher; it is a *making* principle, the source of being for the work of art.[24]

This difference is of paramount importance. The reason for this divergence should be sought in the principles by means of which the object is known by each.[25] These principles will either assume the role of manifesting the truth, or exert a directive and regulative influence on the object with the purpose of bringing it into existence.[26]

Speculative principles, on the one hand, are the intellect's tools for delving into the very being of an object, in order to bring to light its causes, its essential nature. They open the door to an intimate under-

---

[21]Jacques De Monleon, "Note sur la division de la connaissance pratique," *Revue de Philosophie,* XXXIX (1939), 189-198.

[22]John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus* (Paris: Solesmes, 1931), t. I, disp. 2, a. 10, n. 5, p. 395b-396a.

[23]"Sed tunc consideratur res ut est operabilis, quando in ipsa considerantur omnia quae ad eius esse requiruntur simul." St. Thomas, *De Veritate* (vol. I, ed. Spiazzi, *Quaest. Disput.,* Turin: Marietti, 1949), q. 3, a. 3.

[24]*Ibid.,* ad 7; cf. *ibid.,* q. 2, a. 3, ad 8.

[25]"Sicut formalis ratio visibilis sumitur ex lumine, per quod color videtur, ita formalis ratio scibilis sumitur secundum principia, ex quibus aliquid scitur." St. Thomas, *In Arist. Libros Poster, Analyt.* (vol. I, leonine edition, *Opera Omnia;* Rome: Typographia Polyglotta, 1882), I, 1. 41, no. 11.

[26]John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus* (ed. Reiser, Turin: Marietti, 1930), Log. II, q. 1, a. 4, p. 269b, 18-42.

standing of what things are. Because their function is to manifest the truth, the man using them is satisfied to rest in the possession of being, the perfection of his intellect. Under the influence of these speculative principles his mind penetrates beyond the effects and complex data presented by his senses. He unties the knot of confining matter and leads out the knowable elements of a thing, so his mind can gaze upon them unhindered. In this process he is resolving objects into their intelligible causes or reasons for being. Only by so doing can he attain the certain knowledge for which his intellect craves.[27]

Practical principles, for example 'good must be done,' throw light on an object in a different way. When applied to justice, this moral principle informs a man what general direction his actions should take. All the way down to a particular instance, including the moment he commands himself, "Give Smith the five dollars you owe him right now," moral principles regulate and modify his decision. Thus, the principles illuminating the objects of practical knowledge enable the object to be known in reference to its production and the condition of its production. The light they shed on an object, whether an operation or a work, reveals all the factors and circumtsances required for performing or making it in accordance with his knowledge. In other words, practical principles direct the joining together of the object-form with its material conditions, how and when it will be expressed. For this reason they are called synthetic principles.

Due to their directive influence in relation to a work the practical intellect begins its quest in a synthetic or constructive manner. It proceeds from the knowledge of a simple form, or general principle, down to the particular matter in which the form will be embodied and the principle realised. By combining the universal with the particular, linking up parts to form a whole, going from cause to effect, the practical man follows out his own way of knowing a work which is a singular thing and a whole.[28]

Knowledge which is practical in its manner of knowing is essentially practical. The way it proceeds, by synthesis reveals that the formal object of this knowledge is a work to be made as such. Since all knowledge acquires its specific determination from its formal object, that which is turned toward a practical object must be essentially practical.

The End of Practical Knowledge

Finally, in virtue of the end knowledge becomes perfectly or actually practical. Once an artist has conceived the form of a statue as possible of realisation he may or may not intend to use his knowledge. Fitted to govern external productivity because of its mode of apprehension,[29] never-

---

[27]St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, lect. 1, no. 6; *Summa Theol.* I-II, q. 14, a. 5; *Summa Contra Gentiles,* II, cap. 100.

[28]*In Ethic.*, I, lect. 3, no. 35; *In Meta.*, II, lect. 1, no. 278; *ibid.*, V, lect. 21, no. 1087.

[29]*Summa Theol.*, I, q. 79, a. 11, ad 1.

theless his knowledge is refused passage into the domain of action by its own internal limits. Being confined within the intellect, practical knowledge is indifferent to whether its object is given existence or not.[30] This imparting of existence is the special function of an agent or efficient cause, in this case the artist. But his knowledge alone does not enjoy this ability to give existence to things. If it did, everything he knew would prompt him to cause some exterior manifestation of itself.[31] Thus, he must act efficiently by reason of another power he possesses, the will. His will alone implies an efficient influence on the execution of a work.[32] Of course it is the whole man who is responsible for the task performed. Being a creature, though, he needs more than his nature to operate. Through the instrumentality of his intellect and will he arrives at the desired result. But one can determine just which aspect in the work proceeds from each faculty. To the intellect is assigned the creative development of the object-form; to the will, the efficient impulsion to place that form in existence.

However, since the will itself needs an object toward which it may tend, an object that is both an end and a good, how does it obtain this desirable object? Evidently the intellect must proffer the object to the will, because nothing is willed until it is first known. And it is only the practical intellect which can do this. It alone relates what it knows to some end.[33]

How is the will going to be moved by the object of the practical intellect if this object is merely a form to be imitated and not a form to be desired? The solution lies in the fact that this imitable form has two different aspects. It is both the object of practical knowledge and the term or end of the various operations by which that form is expressed in matter. The sculptor sees the mental form he wants to imitate as also the last thing to be accomplished when the statue is completed. The selection of the right marble and suitable tools are all directed toward the realisation of that form. Thus, under this aspect the form is the end of his operations.[34] It is desired as the perfection of the statue. Therefore the same exemplary form is the object of his knowledge and also the end of his operations. Yet these two aspects are formally distinct. One pertains to the line of extrinsic formal cause and the other to that of final cause. When the object is presented to the will under this second aspect, the will determines the form to exist. By this efficacious movement of the will knowledge is rendered actually practical, actually exerting its directive role on man's succeeding activity as he reaches out to a desired good.[35]

---

[30]*Ibid.*, q. 14, a. 8.

[31]St. Thomas, *Super Libros Sententiarum Mag. Petri Lombardi* (ed. Mandonnet, Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), I, dist. 38, q. 1, a. 1.

[32]*De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 14.

[33]*In De Anima*, III, lect. 15, no. 820.

[34]St. Thomas, *De Virtutibus in Communi (Quaest. Disput.*, Vol. II, Turin: Marietti, 1949), a. 6, ad 5.

[35]*De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 8; q. 3, a. 3.

Even from these few points on the nature of practical knowledge we can indicate briefly the value of this knowledge to the whole man. Since human happiness is to be found in the contemplation of God, it follows that whatever else man does must in some way be subordinated to this one ultimate end. Contemplation is the proper perfection of man's nature. All practical knowledge, having the good of some other operation as its end, cannot be sought for itself. It is always referred to another. And that which is for the sake of something else has that other thing for its end.[36] But this other end in question is virtuous activity or a work of art, both of which subserve the good of the whole man. For a virtuous life disposes a man for contemplation. The arts also, especially the fine arts, are intended to purge man's emotions and elevate his mind to divine things. Hence, it is clear that all practical knowledge is ultimately conducive to contemplation by its very nature. An individual may disrupt this subordination of ends by giving all his love to the arts or even to the virtues as such. But if he does, he will thwart the purpose of his own nature.

Leonard Wakefield, O.P.

---

[36]*Summa Contra Gen.*, III, c. 25.

CHRIST THE KING

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, at the close of the last Holy Year, His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, addressed to the entire world his encyclical letter *Quas Primas,* instituting the feast of the Kingship of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Father recalled that in an earlier encyclical, *Ubi Arcano,* he had stated "that this deluge of misfortune over the world was due to the attitude of the majority of men who had banished Jesus Christ and His holy law, not only from their personal lives and conduct, but from family and public life. And we added that no hope of lasting peace among nations could be reasonably entertained while individuals and States denied and rejected the sovereign rule of our Saviour."[1] However, encouraged by the signs of better times and moved by the appeal of Cardinals, Bishops and the faithful, on the sixteenth centenary of the insertion of the phrase *cuius regni non erit finis* in the Nicene Creed, Pius XI introduced into the liturgy the feast of Christ the King.

It is important for us to understand this doctrine for the same reason the Holy Father gave in the introduction to the encyclical *Quas Primas.* "The duty will be yours to explain afterwards to the faithful, in language they can feel and understand, the substance of Our words concerning devotion to Christ as King, so that manifold advantages may attend upon, and result from the annual celebration of the Feast . . ."[2] Indeed, what advantages we might enjoy today if in the past twenty-five years our present statesmen and diplomats, our citizen voters, had been shown that "Christ the King offers to every state a final goal which is beyond its sphere of influence, and it is He who gives it power and authority to rule."[3]

Let us examine the foundations of this doctrine. In Holy Scripture, in the Fathers, and in the liturgy there are ample texts to be cited.

The Old Testament abounds with references to the Kingdom of God. More to our purpose will be those texts referring to the Messias and His coming. The Prophet announces the Messias as King in the text, "For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God of the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace."[4]

---

[1]Pius XI, *Quas Primas,* December 12, 1925, tr. *Irish Ecclesiastical Record,* XXVII (March 1926), 319-331.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]"The Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ," *Blackfriars,* XXII (October 1941), 511.

[4]Isa. 9:6

The symbolical announcement that Christ's kingdom is to replace all other kingdoms and be preferred to them is spoken of by another prophet.[5] In the Psalms we find the characteristics and qualities of the kingdom that is to come. "In His days shall justice spring up, and abundance of peace, till the moon be taken away. . . . And all the kings of the earth shall adore Him, and all nations shall serve Him. For He shall deliver the poor from the mighty, and the needy that had no helper. . . . And He shall save the souls of the poor. . . . For Him they shall always adore. . . . And in Him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed; all nations shall magnify Him."[6] "I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession."[7]

The New Testament provides more explicit references to the reign of Christ. In Chapter 1 of St. Luke the words of the angel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin are recorded. "He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom there shall be no end."[8] St. Matthew in Chapter 28 gives us Christ's own testimony, "All power is given to me in heaven and earth."[9] The Fourth Gospel frequently speaks of Christ's kingship. St. John marks the meeting of Pilate and Jesus in the text, "Pilate said to Jesus, 'Art Thou the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from hence.' Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Art Thou a king then?' Jesus answered, 'Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world . . . Everyone who is of the truth heareth My voice.' "[10] The Epistles of St. Paul often speak of Christ's reign, pointing out its universality.[11]

Among the Fathers of the early Church the preaching of St. Justin and St. Irenaeus on the kingdom of God strengthen the doctrinal foundations. In the *Dialogue With Tryphon,* St. Justin shows that Christ is truly Lord proclaimed in the Old Testament, the one who would provide for all and command all.[12] Against the Gnostics Irenaeus declared that Christ was the principle and end of all, the leader who would release all from their afflictions.[13] St. Ambrose [14] attests to the majesty of Christ, proclaiming His reign through the cross. St. Cyril of Alexandria, the champion of orthodoxy against Nestorius, writes of His dominion over all creatures.[15]

---

[5]Dan. 2:34 f.
[6]Ps. 71:7 f.
[7]Ps. 2:8
[8]Luke 1:32 f.
[9]Matt. 28:18
[10]John 18:33 f.
[11]Heb. 1:2, Rom. 8:34
[12]*P.G.*, VI, 600-620.
[13]*Cont. Haeres.*, *P.G.*, VII, 1005.
[14]*In Luc.*, *P.L.*, XV, 1125.
[15]*In Joan.*, *P.G.*, LXXV, 622.

The title of King is recalled in the great liturgical hymn of thanksgiving, the *Te Deum,* in the words "Thou art the King of Glory, Christ." An antiphon of the Christmas Office calls Christ, "O King of nations." In the various invitatories of Matins in the Divine Office we salute Christ as King of Angels, of Apostles, of Martyrs, of Confessors, of Virgins.

Let us now consider what precisely is meant by the kingship of Christ and what are the conditions, if any, of the regal power of Christ.

An immediate and obvious distinction to be applied is that between the powers attributed purely to the divinity of Christ and those attributable to His humanity. All theologians acknowledge the supreme power of the Word of God. There is no question, therefore, in regard to this divine nature. St. Thomas distinguishes a twofold function of the grace of headship, analogous to the double role exercised by the head with regard to the members of the body. "The head," he says, "influences the other members in two ways. First, by a certain intrinsic influence, inasmuch as motive and sensitive force flow from the head to the other members; secondly, by a certain exterior guidance, inasmuch as by sight and the senses, which are rooted in the head, man is guided in his exterior acts. Now the interior influx of grace is from no one save Christ."[16] St. Thomas goes on to show that Christ also, by His grace of Headship, has a twofold influence upon the soul; interior, because His humanity, united to His divinity has the power of *justification,* exterior, because of His government of His subjects. Justification and sanctification belong to Him as prerogatives of His Priesthood. Government and direction are roles of Christ as King. It is this power that we will investigate.

Theological Basis of the Doctrine

The fundamental basis for this Kingship is that the Holy Trinity willed to give to Jesus Christ, as man, a true and absolute royal power. The Holy Father, in the encyclical *Quas Primas,* brings forward two proofs indicating the Divine Will in this matter. "The foundation of this power and dignity of our Lord is rightly indicated by Cyril of Alexandria. 'Christ,' he says, 'has dominion over all creatures, a dominion not seized by violence nor usurped, but His by essence and by nature.' His kingship is founded upon the ineffable hypostatic union. From this it follows not only that Christ is to be adored by angels and men, but that to Him, as man, angels and men are subject, and must recognize His empire; by reason of the hypostatic union Christ has power over all creatures." It is certainly the doctrine of St. Thomas that the hypostatic union confers on the human nature assumed by Christ a transcendent dignity.[17] This union of the Divine and human natures is, therefore, the primary and essential basis for the kingly power of Christ.

The *second* proof advanced in the encyclical flows from Christ's redemption of mankind. Every creature belongs to God. But by sin man

[16]St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica,* III, q. 8, a. 6. Tr. English Dominicans, Benziger Ed. (New York, 1947).

[17]*Ibid.,* III, q. 58, aa. 2, 3, 4.

lost the Divine Life and, of himself, had no means of regaining that life. The love of Christ for us urged Him to take upon Himself the Incarnation and the Passion, that our debt might be paid. In return, the Holy Trinity made Him the gift of the whole human race. Such a significance can be drawn from Christ's own words, "all power is given to Me in heaven and earth."[18] It is something *given*; it is power *without limits.*

The first thing to be noted about the nature of the power exercised by our Divine Lord is that it is primarily a spiritual power. This is amply proven by Holy Scripture, by Christ's own words, and especially by His actions while here on earth. When, on many occasions, the Jews, and even the Apostles, wrongly supposed that the Messias would restore the liberties and the kingdom of Israel, Christ repelled and denied such suggestions. When the people tried to force the dignity upon Him, He shrank from the honor and hid Himself from them.

It pertains to Christ as spiritual ruler to set before the faithful their common end and to indicate the means of attaining it. It pertains to His spiritual dominion to determine the sanctions for the precepts He imposes, and finally, to reward and punish His subjects according to their deserts. We must keep in mind here a distinction placed earlier: it is the function of His *Kingship* to *combat sin and evil,* but the function of His *Priesthood* to positively *unite souls to God.*

Christ came to restore men to the Divine Life of grace, their highest and most real life, and this mission confers on Him full power of governing the spiritual order. However, we must continue to live our human life. Therefore, a subordination of one to the other must be acknowledged. The temporal sphere must exercise its authority always subordinated to the higher spiritual authority that directs the *final* actions of *all* men. We must further concede to the ruler of the spiritual order a right of intervention in the strictly natural order, should the natural order hinder the progress of men to their final destiny. Christ proclaimed the right of God to be honored in becoming fashion, even though it meant imposing restrictions on the commercial liberties of certain men, as when He drove the money changers from the Temple. What we have said is in regard to the government of the temporal order for the good of the spiritual order. But what is the extent of Christ's power in the purely temporal order?

To the rulers of the earth it belongs to legislate in civil affairs, to determine sanctions for their laws, and to judge their subjects when these laws are transgressed. There is no question of our Lord having taken over or being about to take over any particular country or people. The kings and rulers of the earth need not fear that they shall be supplanted; our Lord's royalty is universal. Is He not the sovereign and judge of all kings and rulers? Pope Pius XI, in the encyclical cited above,

[18]Matt. 28:18.

reminds us that Christ has the right to judge the rulers of the earth as a body, to dictate to them His laws, to reward or punish them for the good or bad use of the power deputed to them. Rulers will have to render an account both of the manner in which they sought the natural common good of their subjects and of the way in which they observed the *objective* order of the world that belongs to Chirst.

The kingdom of Christ embraces all men. "His empire manifestly includes not only Catholic nations, not only those who were baptised, and of right belong to the Church, though error of doctrine leads them astray or schism severs them from her fold; but it includes also all those who are outside the Christian faith, so that truly the human race, in its entirety, is subject to the power of Christ."[19] "Christ is the head of all men, but diversely. For first and principally, He is the Head of such as are united to Him by *glory*; secondly, of those who are actually united to Him by *charity;* thirdly, by those who are actually united to Him by *faith;* fourthly, by those who are united to Him merely in potentiality, which is not yet reduced to act, yet will be reduced to act according to Divine predestination; fifthly, of those who are united to Him in potentiality, which will never be reduced to act; such are those men existing in the world, who are not predestined, who, however, on their departure from this world, wholly cease to be members of Christ, as being no longer in potentiality to be united to Christ."[20]

His Holiness, Pius XI, remarked that because of Christ's supreme excellence it was common custom to give to Him the metaphorical title of King. So He is said to reign *in the minds of men,* both by reason of His great mental vision and His abounding knowledge, and also because He is Truth. *In the wills of men* too, He is said to reign, not only because His human will is in entire and perfect consonance with, and in submission to, the Holy Divine Will, but also because from Him come the moving force and inspiration whereby our free wills are ever incited to the noblest endeavor. Finally, Christ is recognized as ruler *of our hearts,* because of His love that surpasses knowledge, and His meekness and kindness that draws souls to Him.

The prerogatives of Christ as man flow from the literal sense of the word *king* and *kingly power.* For it is only as man that Christ can be said to have received from the Father power and glory and a kingdom, since, being equal with and consubstantial with the Father, He must have all things in common according to His Divinity.

To sum up we may state the following proposition: Jesus Christ our Lord, God and Man, has received from the Holy Trinity in His humanity all power in heaven and earth; all authority is invested in Him; His power is truly regal; this power extends to both the spiritual and temporal spheres, and is all-embracing, universal.

Joachim Pender, O.P.

---

[19]Leo XIII, Encyclical *Annum Sacrum,* May 25, 1899, tr. *American Catholic Quarterly Review* XXIV (July 1899), 74-79.

[20]*Summa Theol.,* III, q. 8, a. 3.

FIRST PRINCIPLES

> **FOR I WILL** behold thy heavens, the works of thy fingers: the moon and the stars which thou hast founded. What is man that thou are mindful of him? Or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou has made him a little less than the angles: thou has crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of thy hands.[1]

Man is a fascinating creature; so near to the angels and yet so near the beasts. Man is forever studying man, eternally engaged in trying to plumb the depths of his own being. Some men engage in this study to see if they cannot make man more like the angels; others find in this pursuit a means of making him more bestial. Such constant warfare of the spirit against matter is always threatening to pull man apart. Some would have man withdraw from the world of sense and live in a tower of intellectualism; others are encouraging him to dwell in the cave of his senses.

Error is found at both of these extremes. Man is a unified whole made up of body and soul, of intellect and sense. To overemphasize one aspect to the neglect of the other is to endanger the delicate balance of this composite. The theme of this essay will concentrate on that part of man's nature which makes him resemble the angels, not however, to the neglect of its dependence in operation upon the sense faculties. Thus, from a consideration of the interplay of intellectual and sensory cognition, perhaps we may glean some small insight into the harmony and complexity of man's composite nature.

The faculty whereby man approaches so closely to the angelic nature is his intellect, and more precisely the intellect as it knows first principles. Noting this similarity, St. Thomas writes:

> Hence, just as our intellect operates with regard to those principles, so the angel operates with regard to all the things which he knows naturally. And since the knowledge of principles is for us the highest point of our knowledge, it is clear that in the highest part of our nature we attain in some manner the lowest point of the angelic nature.[2]

The manner in which our intellect arrives at a knowledge of first principles will constitute the object of our present consideration and this comparison of angelic and human intellection is an apt point of departure.

[1]Psalm 8: 4-7.

[2]"Unde, sicut intellectus noster se habet ad ista principia, sic se habet angelus ad omnia quae naturaliter cognoscit. Et cum cognitio principiorum in nobis sit altissimum nostrae scientiae, patet, quod in supremo nostrae naturae attingimus quodammodo infimum naturae angelicae." (St. Thomas, *De Veritate* [Turin: Marietti, 1942], q. 8, a. 15 [c. *in fine*].)

Meaning of Principle

The first task which confronts us in this consideration is a precise determination of the terminology "first principles." The word "principle" in its broadest connotation signifies the starting point from which some other thing proceeds, without reference to the mode of this procession. A principle of knowledge, however, is said to be that which leads us to an understanding of some other cognitional object; it is that whereby we are enabled to prove other truths, either directly or indirectly. When we speak of *first* principles of knowledge, we refer to indemonstrable propositions which are immediately known when their terms are known, and hence lack a medium both in being and in knowing. Among such principles the following are generally enumerated: the principle of contradiction, the principle of excluded middle, the principle of sufficient reason, and the principle of the whole being greater than its parts. Such principles not only form the sound basis of everyday life, but also serve as the indispensable starting point of all philosophical inquiry.

Scholastic philosophers are in general agreement that our knowledge of first principles is in some manner based upon sensory experience but they quickly part company in endeavoring to explain the mode of this dependence. Their divergencies can be reduced to four main categories. 1) The first group limit the dependence upon sensory cognition to the mere abstraction of the terms of the principle, i.e., subject and predicate of the proposition, which, having been separately received by the mind, are united by it when comparison reveals a compatibility. 2) The second group teaches that the intellect, after abstracting the subject and predicate from sensory experience, recognizes the predicate as contained in the subject and thus unites them in the principle. This theory is denominated as "analysis of the subject." 3) The third position is held by those who say that insofar as we know the terms, we know the principle. Hence they imply an immediate mental union of the abstracted subject and predicate in the very act of knowing. 4) The final position is held by those who teach that the proposition itself is abstracted (universalized) as a whole. In other words the subject and predicate are not separately abstracted, but as previously joined by sense experience. ". . . we sometimes restrict abstraction to simple apprehensions, while in reality, the most important abstractions the human mind makes concern judgments."[3] This fourth position is the one held by Cajetan[4] and, as it will be our endeavor to demonstrate, the one most in accord with the teaching of Aristotle and St. Thomas in this matter.

Let us now return to our point of departure for a brief but careful examination of the comparison between angelic and human understanding.

---

[3]Athanasius Weisheipl, O.P., "Philosophical Wellsprings," *Reality*, I (Winter, 1950), 9.

[4]Cajetan, *In Post. Anal.*, II, cap. 13.

The angelic intellect does not require a discursive process but operates without the necessity of composing and dividing.[5] ". . . the angel by his intellect apprehends immovably, as we apprehend immovably first principles which are the object of the habit of intelligence."[6] Thus it is the mind of St. Thomas that we understand first principles by a simple intuition and not with discursive action or by an intellectual act of composing or dividing. The following texts substantiate this conclusion.

> Hence just as we understand principles without a discursive action and by a simple intuition, so the angels understand all the things which they know; hence they are called intellectual beings; and in us the habit of principles is called understanding (*intellectus*).[7]

> Therefore they (angels) are called *intellectual beings:* because even with ourselves the things which are instantly grasped by the mind are said to be understood (*intelligi*); hence *intellect* is defined as the habit of first principles. But human souls which acquire knowledge of truth by the discursive method are called rational . . .[8]

While these texts strongly tend to confirm our position regarding the mind of St. Thomas as to the understanding of first principles, they are by no means conclusive. Hence to strike at the heart of the matter we must return to the text of Aristotle and consider it in light of succeeding commentators. Before doing so, however, it seems well to set forth the position we intend to maintain in this matter. To do so we can do no better than to again quote Father Weisheipl.

> All of the first judgments of reason have their sensible and analogical counterparts in the judgments of the cogitative faculty. Knowledge of one's own existence, of singular existence and existing things, knowledge that one is not another and that "one thing is not not itself" are all known by the cogitative faculty. Such judgments are potentially universal and intelligible. All that is required is an intellectual light, the light of the agent intellect, to illumine and actualize their universality.[9]

Aristotle's Solution

Aristotle formally treats of the manner of understanding first principles at the end of Book II of the *Posterior Analytica.* First of all we will give an expanded paraphrase of that highly condensed section and then endeavor to explain this paraphrase according to the commentaries of St. Thomas and Cajetan.

All our knowledge cannot be demonstrated. If we persist in seeking proofs, we become involved in an infinite process that belies the possibility of obtaining certitude. We must begin with some immediate, certain, and absolutely evident principles which by their very nature cannot be demonstrated. It is for this reason that Aristotle, after an exhaustive

---

[5]St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica,* I, q. 58, aa. 3, 4. Trans. English Dominicans, Benziger edition (New York, 1947).

[6]*Ibid.,* I, q. 64. a. 2.

[7]"Unde sicut nos sine discursu principia cognoscimus simplici intuitu, ita et angeli omnia quae cognoscunt; unde et intellectuales dicuntur; et habitus principiorum in nobis dicitur intellectus." (*De Veritate,* q. 8, a. 15 [c. *in fine*].)

[8]*Summa Theol.,* I, q. 58, a. 3.

[9]*Op. cit.,* p. 9.

treatment of the syllogism and demonstration, takes up the consideration of primary, immediate premises. Scientific knowledge is impossible without a knowledge of these premises.

In this consideration he immeditaely raises two questions:[10]

1. Are these principles objects of the habits of science, just as the conclusions which flow from them, or are they the object of some other intellectual habit?

2. Is the knowledge of these principles innate or acquired? If innate, is it at first unnoticed?

Since his reply to the first question will ultimately depend upon his response to the second, he immediately proceeds to respond to this latter inquiry. His rejection of an innate knowledge of such principles is absolute. An affirmative response would indicate that we possess apprehensions more accurate than demonstration and fail to notice them. Nor can we acquire them; for we cannot apprehend or learn them without a basis of pre-existent knowledge. Therefore it is necessary that we have some capacity, faculty, or power of knowledge existing before our knowledge of first principles.

The Philosopher then indicates that the potency for sense knowledge fulfills this condition. Here he takes occasion to point out the superiority of sense knowledge in man as compared with sense knowledge in the two lower grades of animal. The comparison is to the point, for it is precisely by reason of this superior sense knowledge that man is capable of furnishing the intellect with material for the abstraction of first principles. Not only can man experience and recall sensation but by reason of his cogitative power can sift, unify, and organize these sensory images. Thus from perception in man arises memory, and from repeated memory of the same thing arises experience, and from experience arises the universal.[11] This is the kernel of the whole chapter and must be borne in mind in order to understand our consequent development of this problem. This Aristotle concludes, ". . . these states of knowledge are neither innate in a determinate form, nor developed from other higher states of knowledge, but from sense-perception."[12] So it was very clear in his mind that a knowledge of first principles is had by induction, and that the interior and exterior senses are pre-existent to such knowledge.

Now he returns to the first inquiry, "Are (first) principles the object of science?"

Of the intellectual habits by which we obtain knowledge, some (intuition and science) are always true, whereas others (e.g., opinion) admit

[10]W. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Prior and Posterior Analytics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), pp. 673-675.

[11]Cf. *Met.*, I, 980a28. *Met.*, I, 1 should be compared with this section. All quotations from Aristotle are from *The Basic Works of Aristotle* edited by Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941).

[12]*Post. Anal.*, II, 19, 100a, 9-11.

of falsity. Intution alone is more certain and more accurate than scientific knowledge. Since first principles are more knowable than the conclusions from them, it is clear that there will not be scientific knowledge concerning the primary premises. Consequently, it will be intution which apprehends first principles. This must be so since science can not be the source of itself, and intution is the only other true state. As St. Thomas points out, what Aristotle here terms intuition had by the twelfth century generally come to be known as *intellectus.* With these considerations Aristotle terminates the *Posterior Analytics.*

Value of Induction

In passing we cannot refrain from pointing out how baseless is the oft depeated accusation that Aristotle reduced all knowledge to deduction, and, deprived of the value of sensory cognition, was content to spin his intellectual castles "in the air." The brief considerations we have so far given to an isolated section of his doctrine reveal how tremendously important a role induction played in the acquisition of first principles. One author has expressed this dependency very succinctly.[13]

> Without Intitution, no First Principles;
> Without Induction, no Intuition;
> Without Sense-experience, no Induction;
> Therefore, Without Sense-experience, no First Principles.

Here we can clearly glimpse the beauty of the Aristotelian-Thomistic synthesis which is moderate realism. Aristotle and St. Thomas avoided the pitfalls of sensism and idealism, and steered a middle course in their realization of the indispensable complimentary roles of intellectual and sense faculties for the acquisition of human knowledge.

As we pointed out in the beginning, Scholastics are in agreement as to fact of dependency upon sense knowledge in the acquisition of first principles; it is the *mode* of dependence over which they are in disagreement. Now while it is not explicitly stated by Aristotle in this passage, nor by St. Thomas in his commentary upon it, that it is the whole proposition which is abstracted by the active intellect, we will now proceed to demonstrate that such a theory actually underlies and is implicit in their reasonings. This demonstration will be conducted by a detailed tracing of the psychological acts involved and by citing related texts from these authors which serve to substantiate our drawing out of this implicit reasoning.

In no text does Aristotle indicate that an analysis of being will yield the principle of contradiction, yet in Book IV of the *Metaphysics* he refers many times to our experience of being. In at least four texts he mentions sense experience of the principle of causality, yet not once does he say we discover the principle of causality by considering the concepts of contingent being.[14] As was indicated in the discussion of the last chapter

---

[13]Edmund H. Ziegelmeyer, "The Discovery of First Principles According to Aristotle," *Modern Schoolman,* XXII (March, 1945), 140.

[14]*Ibid.,* pp. 140-141.

of the *Posterior Analytics,* it is Aristotle's doctrine that our knowledge of principles comes from induction and experience. It will be evident from an examination of opposing teachings that most errors on this matter are due to a failure to distinguish clearly between the actual discovery of these principles and their later use in application to scientific knowledge itself. It is our intent to point out later that great blame for this failure can be traced to the confusing terminology with regard to analytic and synthetic judgments.

The well-known Aristotelean formula, "Sense – memory – experience – understanding of the principles from which science is derived," will serve as the basis for the proof that first principles arise through immediate abstraction from the phantasm. The term of this formula which requires more exacting determination is experience. Precisely what is its meaning and how does it arise? To answer these questions demands a discussion of the *vis cogitativa,* the faculty which holds the key to the solution of our problem. Though it is only among modern psychologists of the experimental school that we find a complete ignoring of this faculty, nevertheless, failure on the part of scholastics to fully appreciate its role in sensory cognition has led to confusion and error. Unfortunately our consideration warrants only a summary of the conclusions which others have derived from their study of this important power.[15]

The Cogitative Sense

Of all the sense faculties only the cogitative collaborates immediately with the intellect, although one might be led by certain manuals to suppose that the imagination presents phantasms immediately to the intellect. Such texts are guilty of confusing terminology, since, for St. Thomas, the words *imaginatio* and *phantasia* are sometimes used as generic terms referring to all the internal senses except the common sense, or they may refer to the imagination itself. Father Barbado makes an excellent point in this regard.[16] The role of common sense is the unification of external sensory images into the percept, which the imagination, in turn, forms into the phantasm. The phantasm is then, as it were, passed on to the cogitative power from which it receives the proximate preparation for abstraction. The cogitative is the last sense power to operate on the phantasm before it is made actually intelligible by the active intellect.

Among the functions of the cogitative faculty, we are primarily concerned with its role in the formation of the *experimentum* or experience. From many sensations there is one memory and from many memories there is formed one *experimentum.* This *experimentum* is the fruit of the

[15]Thomas V. Flynn, O.P., "The Cogitative Power According to St. Thomas and His Commentators," (unpublished lectorate thesis, Dominican College of St. Thomas Aquinas, River Forest, Ill., 1947).

Julien Peghaire, "A Forgotten Sense, The Cogitative According to St. Thomas Aquinas," *The Modern Schoolman,* XX (1942-43), 123-140,210-229.

Manuel Barbado, O.P., *Estudious de Psicologia Experimental* (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 1948), pp. 724-781.

[16]Barbado, *op. cit.,* pp. 776-778; *Summa Theol.* I, q. 78, a. 4*ad*, 4; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus* (Turin: Marietti, 1930-37), Phil. Nat., IV, q. 8, aa. 1, 2).

activity of the cogitative operation. "Cogitative *discursus* is terminated in a singular judgment. This judgment is a conclusion from the faculty's comparison of many similar memories. This judgments is called *experience.*"[17] To attribute this power of synthesizing and making judgments to the cogitative should not prove surprising.

> It is in this process that verification of the nominal definition of the cogitative power is found. For here particularly there is observable "a power that drives, or constantly moves, things together with one another, in order to make one out of many."[18]

In this singular judgment of the cogitative faculty we find potentially present, at least in a confused manner, the actual universal of the intellect. The phantasm is now completely prepared for abstraction. For when the cogitative power forms its experimental judgment, the phantasm is then instrumentally elevated by the active intellect to impress itself on the possible intellect.

Returning now to our formula, "Sense — memory — experience — principles," it is seen how many sensations combine to form one memory, and many memories, one experience. Finally, the uniting of these experiences by the cogitative results in the formation of a principle, at least potentially universal. Hence there is no need for a separate process of abstraction for subject and predicate, followed by a mental analysis, before actual intellectual predication takes place.

> And because the experience from which intellectual cognition takes its rise and to which intellectual cognition reduces itself is formulated in a judgment, it is clear that Cajetan was correct in holding against Scotus and Scotists that the intellect necessarily abstracts judgments from the imagination.[19]

Time and again in his defense of this position against the Scotists, Cajetan explains at length how this doctrine is in complete accord with the teaching of Aristotle. He stresses Aristotle's insistence upon experience and induction in the formation of first principles and the necessary consequence of an implied complexity in the sensory knowledge itself. Hence the necessity of abstracting a *complex whole.*[20]

Nor do we find great difficulty in answering those who deny that the active intellect can abstract complex as well as simple notions from the phantasms. A number of passages from St. Thomas can be cited to establish this possibility.[21] In the *De Veritate* he clearly states that complex notions such as dignities (axioms or principles) are abstracted by the active intellect and immediately known. Thus the active intellect is the cause, and indeed the immediate cause, of both the act and the habit of principles in the possible intellect. These first principles are the in-

---

[17]Flynn, *op. cit., p.* 28.

[18]*Ibid.*, p. 29.

[19]*Ibid.*, p. 31. In that quotation note also the use of "imagination" in its generic sense.

[20]Cajetan, *Super Praedicabilia Porphyrii etc.* (Venetiis, apud Hier. Scotum, 1554); *In Poster. Analyt.* II, cap. 13; fol. 92, Col. 3-4.

[21]St. Thomas, *In Boet. de Trin.* q. 6, a. 4; *De. Ver.* q. 11, a. 1.

struments of the active intellect, and through them the light of the active intellect will illumine all other knowledge.[22] As has been seen, these principles are the prerequisites for all other knowledge. Aristotle was not being facetious when he remarked that without the principle of contradition man is little more than a vegetable. The principle of contradiction must be the first thing that breaks in upon our intellectual consciousness – and it must come as a whole. It is impossible that the subject and predicate of this principle be understood separately and then compared and united by the intellect. Such a process would demand that the principle of contradiction already be possessed by the intellect.

This condition does not alter the fact that being is the first concept in the intellect and that simple apprehension precedes judgment. The complex must be seen directly in the phantasm even though the simple notions are in some manner first understood. In other words there can be a priority of nature between the understanding of the simple notions (simple apprehension) and the judgment of the principle. Since the principle is abstracted (universalized) as a whole (i.e., as a particular judgment) from the cogitative faculty, there is no necessity for a time lag between simple apprehension and judgment. Since our whole solution rests upon an understanding of this process we will now subject it to a more detailed consideration.

In both simple apprehension and judgment there is a *first* operation; there is a first simple apprehension and there is a first judgment. The first simple apprehension is the concept of being, for nothing can be conceived of by the first act of the mind prior to its conception of being. The first judgment is the principle of contradiction. Hence all other acts of composing and dividing are posterior to this first judgment which is the principle of contradiction.[23] In its light are formulated and understood all other principles and judgments. We shall now pass from this metaphysical consideration to a psychological analysis.

Let us consider the small child, ready for his first intellectual knowledge. His external and internal senses are now sufficiently developed to present a phantasm to the intellect. Perchance his eye falls on a small toy clutched in his hand. The visual and tactile sensations are unified by the common sense, the percept and phantasm are formed, and the active intellect abstracts and the possible intellect receives its first concept (simple apprehension) and its first judgment.

When the sense has perceived in its fashion that *this thing exists,* the intellect in turn fashions a concept of *this being* or perhaps *this thing* (implicitly containing the idea of being), and simultaneously the absolutely first judgment is formed: *this exists* or *this being exists.* There is a single simultaneous stimulation of both intellect and judgment.[24]

---

[22]*Quaestiones Disp., De Anima* a. 5 (c. *in fine*); a. 4 ad 6; *Summa Theol.,* I-II, q. 53, a. 1.

[23]St. Thomas, *In Meta.* (ed. Cathala, Turin: Marietti, 1935), IV, lect. 6, n. 605; *De Potentia,* q. 9, a. 7 ad 15.

[24]Jacques Maritain, *Existence and the Existent* (New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1948), pp. 22-34.

> . . . in the initial upsurge of its (the intellect's) activity out of the world of sense, in the first act of self-affirmation accomplished by expressing to itself any datum of experience, it apprehends and judges the same instant. It forms its first idea . . . while uttering its first judgment . . . and utters its first judgment while forming its first idea.[25]

We are naturally inclined to think of simple apprehension as preceeding judgment in time for this is the usual case. But here at the beginning of thought each depends upon the other, and there exists only a priority of nature. M. Maritain points out further that the simple apprehension precedes the judgment in the order of material causality and the judgment precedes the simple apprehension in the order of formal causality.

The divergencies between the psychological and metaphysical analyses are at once apparent. With regard to simple apprehension, it is easily seen that the concept of being is the first idea. A great deal more difficulty is experienced in determining from the psychological analysis how the principle of contradiction is the first judgment. It seems, rather, that we have attained to what is commonly known as the principle of identity. This problem is not, of course, of particular interest to the psychologist. Once he knows that this first judgment in which the intellect knows that this thing exists (and in which it grasps the act of existing and the notion of existence) is prior to all other judgments, he is satisfied. The metaphysician's work, however, begins at this point. It is the task of the metaphysician to determine the expression of this principle, to show how it illumines all our knowledge, and to defend its validity. Hence he is concerned with its proper expression.

From our psychological analysis we saw what our first judgment was. The metaphysician, however, must give expression to this principle in a useful manner. Thus, in its ennuciation, he must give consideration to the fact that it is an imperfect intellect which knows and that it knows things negatively and by opposition. Nevertheless, just as we always know affirmatives before negatives, so the affirmative form of the principle (principle of identity) was, in a sense, first. We can draw a parallel between this and our first judgment in the practical order, namely, "Good must be done," secondly, "Evil must be avoided." Thus we find in the metaphysician's statement of the principle both an affirmative and negative element. A common mode of expressing this principle is as follows: *Quod est impossibile idem simul inesse et non inesse idem et secundum idem.* This represents a considerable refinement of the principle as it is actually ennunciated in the mind of the child but, nevertheless, does not do violence to the psychological concept.

The other first principles are known in a similar manner, but require more sense experiences. They, like the first principle which is that of contradiction, are presented to the active intellect as a whole by the cogitative power.

---

[25]*Ibid.*, p. 23.

We turn now to a brief consideration of the texts of St. Thomas which substantiate the foreging conclusions. Considering the texts where St. Thomas speaks of the opposition between *intellectus,* the habit of first principles, and *scientia,* the habit of conclusions, it again must be admitted that the active intellect abstracts the principles from the senses.[27] The knowledge of first principles, in opposition to the knowledge of conclusions, is attributed by St. Thomas to the active intellect because its work is to abstract them from the senses. If a knowledge of principles could arise from an analysis of the simple notions, the principles could be said to be able to be resolved into the concepts. Again, if a knowledge of principles could arise from an analysis of the simple notions, the notions themselves would be instruments of the active intellect in obtaining the knowledge of principles. Neither of these positions can be held for it was shown earlier how the habit of principles is caused by the active intellect, and the habit of science by the principles themselves.[28] If, however, one holds that the principles are known by an analysis of the ideas and not by direct abstraction, one could not simultaneously hold without considerable difficulty the causality of the active intellect in the formation of these principles. As we have stated above the habit of first principles is *immediately* caused in the possible intellect by the active intellect. These principles are the instrument of the active intellect in all its other operations. Thus it is impossible that the principles arise from a comparative analysis of the terms. Such a process would rule out the *immediate* casuality of the active intellect in their formation.

Sources of Confusion

Before concluding we wish to briefly point out two sources for the confusion that has frequently appeared in the consideration of this problem. The first is a misunderstanding of the phrase *cognitis terminis* as it is applied to our knowledge of first principles. To say that first principles are known *cognitis terminis* does not mean "from" a knowledge of the terms but "with" a knowledge of the terms. It indicates a priority of nature and of simple apprehension rather than a formulation of the principle from a knowledge of the terms. It signifies that the principles are known without a medium. Over and above a knowledge of the terms it is required in a concrete case that the very nature of the nexus be seen.[29] It is insufficient to say that the principles are known insofar as the terms are known. That is certainly true; but it ignores the important consideration that the terms are abstracted and understood as a whole, and not abstracted separately and united in the intellect.

The second source for confusion in the solution of this problem was the introduction by Emmanuel Kant of the terms analytic and synthetic

---

[27]For the texts and full explanation of conclusions summarized here cf. P. Hoenen, "De Origine Primorum Principiorum Scientiae," *Gregorianum,* XIV (1933), 171-174.

[28]*Summa Theol.,* I-II, q. 51, a. 2; I-II, q. 53, a. 1.

[29]Hoenen, *op. cit.,* p. 180.

judgments. Though scholastics rejected his system of thought, they did purify and accept some of his terminology. The following lineup illustrates how they adapted his terminology in regard to these judgments but changed their meaning.

Kant's doctrine:

Analytic judgment: The predicate is contained in the comprehension of the subject. The predicate can be found in the subject by an analysis, break down, or explication of the subject.

Synthetic judgments:

1. *A posteriori*—experimental judgments; they express only experience; they are always concerned with concrete and contingent matter.

2. *A Priori*—these go beyond experience and presuppose the addition of some element which the mind can only find in itself. These are the judgments which properly constitute science.

The terminology as accepted by scholastics:

Synthetic judgments: all judgments which arise from experience.

Analytic judgments: All other judgments, especially principles *per se nota quoad nos,* whether the predicate is contained in the comprehension of the subect or not; for even in this last case it is said that it is analysis which permits the relation to be apprehended.[30]

A careful examination of the scholastic "purification" process reveals the cause for the confusion. First principles were readily placed in the category of analytic judgments. This classification was justified by explaining that they were known either from an analysis of the subject alone, or from a comparative analysis of the subject and predicate, or that they were known insofar as the terms were known.[31] In light of what has previously been said this reasoning fails to satisfy. The poverty of these "purified" Kantian terms is obvious. It is clearly an oversimplification to place first principles in the category of analytic judgments.

The importance of discovering and maintaining the true Aristotelian-Thominstic position on the subject of first principles requires no demonstration, for without it we can proceed with no degree of certitude in any branch of philosophical inquiry. Let us beseech the Angelic Doctor to urge more penetrating minds than ours to a comprehensive consideration of this matter.

Benedict Endres, O.P.

---

[30]P. Geny, *Critica,* (Rome: Universitas Gregoriana, 1932), p. 290.
[31]Hoenen, *op cit.,* p. 153; pp. 183-184.

AN ANOMALOUS ANALOGY

THE WORD *analogy* understood in its broadest connotation signifies a kind of likeness. The mathematician, the physical scientist, the philosopher and the theologian, and even those uninitiated in the higher branches of learning are all agreed on this point: analogy is used to indicate relationships of similarity or likeness existing between two or more things. Unanimity of opinion ends abruptly here, however, and a closer look at the topic reveals a noticeable lack of harmony among those concerned.

This discord is especially true of the schools of philosophy within the Scholastic tradition. As with so many other questions, Christian Philosophers, especially since St. Thomas' day, have always been at odds about the problem of analogy. Disputes among the Scholastics on fundamentals are always to be regretted, for they deprive Scholasticism of a unity which it greatly needs if it is to meet the inroads of modern philosophy and if it is to be of maximum service to theology. As Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange aptly remarks: "Have we not in these days enough common enemies against whom we must unite for the defence of the faith and the good of souls?"[1]

It is with regret then that we must emphasize the inter-Scholastic differences which divide the Christian philosophers. But an insistence upon those differences, though always without animosity, is necessary, for Pius X admonishes: "we warn teachers to bear in mind that a slight departure from the teaching of Aquinas, especially in Metaphysics, is very detrimental. As Aquinas himself says, 'a slight error in the beginning is a great error in the end.' "[2]

Pius X might well have had the dispute about analogy in mind when he wrote these words. For analogy is one of those questions, the importance of which can easily be neglected by the incautious philosopher. Indeed, the history of philosophy is filled with the names of men who have failed to realize the full significance of this question. Moreover, when Pius X insists upon the primacy of St. Thomas' metaphysics, Thomistic philosophers naturally realize the importance of an equivalent primacy of St. Thomas' doctrine on analogy; for analogy is basic for this most universal of the universal sciences, and is so fundamental to a

---

[1]R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *God: His Existence and His Nature* (St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder Book Co., 1939) Vol. II, p. 246.

[2]Quoted by Garrigou-Lagrange in *The One God,* Eng. trans. by Dom Bede Rose (St. Louis Mo.: Herder, 1946), p. 8.

sythesis of philosophy and theology that a misunderstanding of it has led and does lead to extreme errors.

The name of Francisco Suarez, the illustrious philosopher-theologian of the 16th century, is closely connected with the question of analogy. Suarez, the *Doctor Eximius,* is recognized today by historians of Philosophy as an eclectic, as a philosopher who fashioned an original synthesis of philosophy with doctrines gathered from other men, but gathered without due respect for logical consistency. Much in the system that he built up was borrowed from St. Thomas, for Suarez took his principal inspiration from the Angelic Doctor and the larger bulk of his writings were set down in the form of a commentary on St. Thomas' works. Yet Suarez cannot therefore be called a Thomist; his eclecticism too often led him far afield of genuine Thomistic thought to earn for him that title, and caused him to introduce much into his system that is completely alien to the mind of St. Thomas. What is more, he professedly sought to steer a middle course between St. Thomas and Duns Scotus, and it is this, the main burden of his eclecticism, that must ultimately deprive him of a place within the Thomist school.

However, Suarez gets credit for trying to align two mutually exclusive syntheses of philosophy which in his day accounted for the main rift among the Christian philosophers. The syntheses of Thomism and Scotism were the central currents of the Scholastic revival which was taking place in the 16th century. As one of the leaders of that revival, he made great attempts to unify the opposing tendencies of these two schools. It is because of the *via media* which he sought to establish between them that he became involved in the doctrine of analogy.

Their respective doctrines of being mark the greatest point of difference between the Metaphysics of St. Thomas and Scotus. This is a radical divergence, for since being underlies and pervades the whole study of Metaphysics — or better, since the study of being *is* Metaphysics — it follows that a divergence with regard to being will lead to many other diversities throughout the whole science. And, this is, in fact, singularly verified in St. Thomas' and Scotus' Metaphysics.

Stated very plainly, their opposition is simply the difference between univocity and analogy. For St. Thomas teaches that being is analogical, understanding analogy in its proper and exact sense. Scotus, on the other hand, holds for univocity of being. To underline what has been said before, this antithesis of analogy-versus-univocity revolves around the very object of Metaphysics: *being.*

Quite naturally then, Suarez set about his work of conciliation with these two diverse teachings on being. First, he denied the Scotistic position on the univocity of being, saying, rightly enough, that were the concept of being a univocal concept, it would be a genus. But if being is a genus, he observed, then God and creatures must fall within the same genus and their distinction as beings can no longer be upheld. Scotus,

of course, would not admit the latter as a necessary outcome of his doctrine of univocation; by subtle distinctions he managed to preserve in his own mind both the univocity of being and the distinction of God and creatures in the order of being. Nevertheless, there was an inconsistency here and Suarez did not fail to see it. Hence he was forced, at least verbally, to reject the Scotistic position.

But when Suarez had done away with the theory of Scotus, he did not then go over to the Thomist side. Claiming to preserve St. Thomas' true meaning, he denied the position put forth by Cardinal Cajetan, whose work on analogy was in Suarez' day, as it is in ours, the main representation of the living tradition of St. Thomas. This does not mean that he categorically denied analogy as he had done with the univocity of being. On the contrary, he was convinced of its importance; he understood well enough that it was necessary for St. Thomas' philosophy. His opposition was, therefore, directed not against analogy as such, but against Cajetan's interpretation of analogy.

Cajetan maintained the analogy of proper proportionality as the one, true, formal metaphysical analogy. Proper proportionality, as he understood it and as it has been accepted within the Thomist school since his time, may be summed up as follows:

> It is a relation between proportions, or as it is called a proportionality. What is common to the concept of being as applied to God and the concept of being applied to man, is this: that just as God's being is that by which He is, so man's being is that by which he is. That does not mean that the relation between God and His being is the same as the relation between man and his being; on the contrary, they are infinitely different; but in both cases the relation exists, and the fact that it exists within the bosom of each being sets up an analogy between them all. That precisely, is the *analogy of being*, and we see why it is only an analogy of proportionality, since it can be set up between beings which are out of all proportion, provided only that each of these is to itself what the others are to themselves.[3]

This analogy of proper proportionality which Cajetan insisted upon for metaphysics was, to repeat, as unacceptable to Suarez as Scotus' doctrine of univocation. For as he visualized it, such analogy necessarily weakened and even destroyed the unity of the concept of being. This was to his mind a serious flaw and when it came down to a question of choosing between proper proportionality and the unity of the concept Suarez declared himself in favor of the latter. As he himself says:

> Now I merely assert that everything which has been said concerning the unity of the concept of being, appears to be clearer and more certain than that being is analogous. Therefore, in order to defend analogy, it is not right to deny the unity of the concept; but if one of the two must be denied, it is analogy, which is uncertain, that is to be denied rather than unity of concept, which seems to be demonstrated by sound arguments.[4]

---

[3]E. Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy;* The Gifford Lectures 1931-2, Eng. Trans. by A. H. Downes (New York: Chas. Schribner's Sons, 1940), p. 448.

[4]Suarez, *Disputations metaphysicae,* disp. 2, sect. 2, no. 34. English translation taken from Garrigou-Lagrange, *The One God,* p. 405, footnote 64.

Obviously, Suarez had to fill in the gap he had now created in Metaphysics. Since being is neither univocal as Scotus says, nor analogical in the sense of Cajetan, he had immediately to provide an answer to the question: then what is it?

In order to understand his answer, it should be recalled that for Thomists there is actually only one, real, formal metaphysical analogy, and that is proper proportionality. The other two modes of analogy, attribution and metaphor, are not generally conceded to be true analogies, but only – and this is the only way it should be stated – analogically analogies. The three modes, that is, are more diverse than alike, resembling one another only in that each is a type of relation of similitude between diverse things that are only somehow alike. The three modes are among themselves analogical, metaphor and attribution being only imporperly analogies.

The analogy of attribution is said to be an improper analogy because in it any particular analogical form under consideration is not had intrinsically in all of the analogates, but only in the primary one, while the other analogates receive the predication of the form only through extrinsic attribution. The time-worn but ever useful example of this mode is that of health. Health is said of a healthy animal because that animal possesses the perfection of health formally, properly, and intrinsically. But a climate, or good food, or a rosy complexion are said to be healthy, not because they possess this perfection intrinsically and properly but rather because they are the causes or a sign of health in the animal. So, we say that they receive the designation "healthy" by an extrinsic attribution, while the prime analogate, the animal, is found to have it in an intrinsic manner.

Metaphorical analogy is also termed an "improper" analogy, but for a different reason than attribution. A metaphorical analogue is one that is based on real likenesses, but which is predicated *properly* of only the prime analogate, the other analogates communicating in the analogue only by a figure of speech. For example, "smiling" refers properly to the mirthful face of a man, but only by way of similitude or in a figurative manner is it said of a peaceful summer sky, a verdant meadow, or bountiful fortune.

Neither metaphor nor attribution adequately fulfills the requirements for true metaphysical analogy, for the latter requires that all of the analogates communicate in the analogical form intrinsically (this excludes attribution) and properly (this excludes metaphor). Hence, proper proportionality, because it satisfies both of these conditions, is the one true analogy of metaphysics. Thomists have always insisted on this. It is what Suarez denied.

In order to supplant Cajetan's analogy of proper proportionality and at the same time retain an analogical doctrine for metaphysics, Suarez

issued a new interpretation of what St. Thomas meant by the analogy that was linked up to being. This was his "analogy of intrinsic attribution."

For Suarez, intrinsic attribution consists in a relationship of likeness between two or more things, all of which have some similar *intrinsic* form, which form belongs absolutely to the primary analogate, and to the others only through their intrinsic relationship to the primary analogate. To illustrate this, he gives the example of substance and accident. Substance, he says, is being primarily and absolutely, whereas accident is not spoken of as being except by reason of the intrinsic relationship which it bears to a substance. In other words the whole being of an accident consists simply in this intrinsic relationship of dependence to substance.

In like manner Suarez applied the analogy of intrinsic attribution to the divine Being and to created beings. God, Who is essentially being receives the predication of being in its most proper and absolute sense, while creatures who have being by participation are only said to have being inasmuch as they are dependent upon God and subordinate to Him; their whole being is the relation of dependence which they have to the divine Being.

It was necessary that Suarez insist upon the relationship spoken of here as the formal note of created being because of his denial of the real distinction. For if in creatures there is no real distinction between essence and existence, as he maintained there was not, then he had in some way to account for the distinction between creatures and God, in Whom there is likewise no distinction of essence and being. To do this, he made the difference between the Infinite and the finite consist in the real relation of dependence of the latter upon the former.

The chief demands then of the analogy of intrinsic attribution are two. First, the signification must be proper, that is, the analogical term must belong properly to every one of the analogates. Secondly, while it is not necessary that the secondary analogates be defined through the primary one, it *is* necessary that they bear an essential relation to and have a real dependence upon the primary analogate, which dependence must be expressed by the analogy.

Moreover, Suarez demanded a definite and real unity in the concept of being. But he states that the objective concept of being cannot actually and implicitly contain all of the various modes of being. Since true analogy demands that this be so, that God and creatures, substance and accident, and all the other modes of being be actually and implicitly present in the concept of being, Suarez, at the risk of a return to univocation, was forced to admit that analogy was not quite clear in his mind, that it was uncertain. In order to avoid verbal contradiction, he finally relegated analogy to a position of lesser importance because of that uncertainty.

The criticism Thomsits have always leveled against Suarezian analogy is that it finally ends up in contradiction. Suarez speaks of the creature's

being as being-by-participation and yet insists that in the creature there is no distinction between essence and existence. This is a contradiction, for it is manifestly impossible to think of participation, and at the same time not to distinguish between the thing participating and the thing participated, the essence and the existence. Moreover, it is impossible to establish a relation to a cause as the being of a thing, because this inverts the logical order; a thing is not said to have being because it is related to its cause, but it is said to be related to its cause because it has the being. The being must first be there before the relationship can follow. Finally, according to Suarez, there is no proper proportionality between God and creatures, because God has the perfection of being formally and properly while creatures have it only through their relationship to God. But if this is true, then God alone has being intrinsically and formally, while creatures have it non-inherently and not formally. Such a possession of being on the creature's part must then be something extrinsic, and when being becomes an extrinsic perfection then the concept of being becomes a univocal concept. The logical outcome of all of the foregoing must consequently be the univocation of being which is the very thing Suarez constantly denied.

Actually, the insistence upon the essential unity of the concept was Suarez' fatal mistake. If the objective concept of being can in no wise implicitly and actually contain all of its inferiors, simple logic will lead one to the unicity of being. This is evident because the alternatives are these two: either the objective concept pertains to all being in exactly the same way and for exactly the same reasons — and this is univocation; or the concept of being, lacking the *essential* unity which Suarez desired, pertains to all thing in diverse ways and for diverse reasons — and this is precisely the proper proportionality proposed by the Thomistic school. It has to be one or the other. Between univocity and analogy there is no middle ground for the metaphysician.

Very probably Suarez had difficulties with Thomistic analogy because of some misconception on his part of St. Thomas' meaning. The Angelic Doctor left no explicit treatise on analogy, and in those places where he does touch upon it, his treatment is almost always *in actu exercito*, not *in actu signato*, i.e., it is almost always a case of giving the necessary explanations as applied to particular cases, and not of writing *ex professo* on any mode of analogy. The examples he cites generally are cases of "mixed" analogy, cases which contain under different aspects both proportionality and attribution. Added to this, Suarez seems not to have understood the tie-up between Cajetan's terminology and St. Thomas' own, which are not always the same. At any rate, he failed to grasp the precise meanings of attribution and proportionality — in fact, he confused these — and so introduced into his philosophy the anomaly of analogy and the other antinomies of which his synthesis is guilty.

Damian Fandal, O.P.

OUR COVER

THE COVER design of our magazine attempts to symbolize reality.

Being, nothingness. Act, potency. The one, the many. Light, darkness. Spirit, matter. Form, the formless. Heaven, earth. Life, death. Grace, sin. How better symbolize these many contraries constituting the stuff of reality than by black and white? In the darkness of the void, in the beginning, there moved alone the Spirit, the "breath," of God. How better symbolize spirit than by a graceful curved line, and the Spirit of God than by a line running off the pages to express the limitlessness and eternity of the Almighty. The words "In the beginning God created heav . . ." similarly run off the page to express the eternity of the infinite power of God which created the universe in the dark womb of the void.

The Spirit that moved through the void is Goodness and Love – subsistent Self-giving. What more fitting than for Love to scatter Himself, His Being, His Light, through the void by creation? The white blotch symbolizes creation as opposed to the darkness of non-being, and likewise form as opposed to prime matter, the abyss upon which there was no light.

But the Love of God was so great that, when man had fallen into the dark night of sin, God sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we may live through him. And that life was the light of men. The curved line penetrating into the blotch of white, into creation, symbolizes the Incarnation. The cross of words represents the cross of our redemption, our restoration to light, won for us by our Priest, Jesus Christ, whose priesthood, like the creative power of the Father, overflows the limits of space and time anchoring it to ancient Calvary.

(Editor's note: The cover design and the explanation of its symbolism are the work of Christopher Kiesling, O.P.)

THE INTERIOR LIFE OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

By
Right Reverend Monsignor Martin Grabmann

Translated by
Nicholas Ashenbrener, O.P.

This book treats of the spiritual and the interior life of St. Thomas, the source of his great intellectual genius. This it accomplishes by the only way possible, an analysis of the very works of St. Thomas from which the author extracts some most illuminating thoughts.

Besides this spiritual treatment, the work puts forth the solid ideal of Christian perfection based on the Angelic Doctor's masterly doctrine. The subject matter, then, is twofold: a keen spiritual insight into the angelic soul of the Patron of all Catholic schools; and a marvelous portrayal of the Christian ideal.

Dr. Grabmann reveals the soul of St. Thomas as found in various personal passages from his own works and as given in the testimonies of various witnesses at his canonization process as seen in the highest Christian virtue and its corresponding gift and beatitude: wisdom, charity, and peace; and finally as related to the mysticism of Christ crucified.

(Publication date: August)

Published by
THE BRUCE PUBLISHING COMPANY
Milwaukee 1, Wisconsin